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Marxism Today

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JOZEF PAJESTKA — NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PLANNING AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN POLAND

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Marxism Today

Vol. 10 No. 8

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Editorial Comments

IN view of Mr. Wilson's red-baiting speech on the Seamen's strike it is worth while disinterring some of his remarks in his winding-up speech in the debate of June 28th. Mr. Wilson said that some of his "Hon-friends" had on the eve of the strike reported the mood of the seamen as follows:

> "They (evidently from the context some seamen's officials) did not want to make life more difficult for the Labour Government. They wanted the Government to succeed and they did not want to harm the nation. They said this, and it was right, but they said that in the present mood of the seamen, if they did not have a strike, unofficial elements would take over. They said that they had to have this strike to assert their leadership over the seamen, because the seamen were so incensed about the whole situation. At one stage I understand, they told the TUC that if the employers were to concede the whole 40 hours a week case there would be a strike if only to celebrate, because they had it so much in their blood. If there were any attempts on the part of the executive to stop the strike, the executive would lose the leadership for all time to other elements."

The passage is interesting for two things. The "wheels within wheels" in the Seamen's executive, and the impression which Wilson's informants gave of the enormous popular pressure for the strike. This is we believe a true picture and it explains how stubbornly the strike was fought. It is a picture completely inconsistent with the Prime Minister's thesis that the strike was being prolonged by a Red take-over bid in this union.

Britain's Taxes

It is one of the dogmas of the Tory Party that Britain is one of the most heavily taxed countries in the world. *The Economist* has been surveying the scene in the capitalist world and disputes this.

> "Contrary to undying popular belief Britain is not one of the most heavily taxed countries in the world. True taxes of all kinds devour about one-third of the national output. But this is well below the figures of between 40 per cent and 45 per cent which hold good in France, Sweden and (West) Germany. Even Americans suffer 30 per cent of their income to be claimed back in taxes. . . . Both America and Britain in fact, would appear even lower in the tax burden table if it were not for defence expenditure." (*The Economist*, June 25th, 1966)

It is also argued by the Tories that Britain relies more than other countries on personal income tax. *The Economist* disagrees.

> "The second chart on this page shows it once again in a middle position along with Germany. Sweden is well ahead with 55 per cent of its taxes collected directly from individuals and France well to the rear. . . . France and Britain make up with a fairly heavy reliance on indirect taxes. America and Japan tend to tax companies heavily."

Family allowances enter the picture:

> "In Britain they are niggardly and taxed. In America there are none at all. In France two children bring 50s. (per week). In Britain 10s. or less. Family allowances lessen, and in some cases even destroy, the tax advantage of low income British and American families."

The Economist does not however deprive the British well-to-do of all their grouses. It appears that after £1,500 a year, they pay a greater proportion of their income in tax than anyone else except the Swedes.

"*Free*" *China*

It seems as if the defenders of American policy in the Far East will not be pleased with a Mr. George H. Kerr who has just written a book describing how the Chiang Kai-shek government got control of Taiwan (Formosa) after the second world war.

It appears that in early 1946 there occurred a rising (largely peaceful) in which the Formosans took control of most of the island. They appointed a "settlement committee" to negotiate a settlement with the Chiang Kai-shek governor.

In a review of *Formosa Betrayed*, Mr. Kerr's book, a reviewer summarises what then happened.

> "On March 8th the Governor replied by landing some 13,000 troops. For the next month terror reigned and 5,000-10,000 Formosans are estimated to have been hunted down and murdered—all the leaders of the reform movement, government critics, men prominent in business and the community, students, anyone who had offended the mainland Chinese. *A generation of leaders was eliminated.*" (Italics ours)

The Chiang Kai-shek control of Taiwan (Formosa) was therefore initiated by a massacre. Yet this subjugated island, "protected" by the American fleet is represented as "free China", is given a seat in the United Nations Security Council, is represented by U.S. mythology as the legitimate government of China. No one in Britain accepts this nonsense. But how eager are members of the British Government to accept American mythologising about Vietnam.

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In Ghana Today

Readers who are striving to understand what happened in Ghana would do well to read the interview with Geoffrey Bing, QC, which appeared in *The Listener* on June 30th. An extract should whet readers' appetites to read the whole story.

Robert Mackenzie asked Bing:

> "One sees that of course these countries eager for economic development, impulsive, may fall short of their goals, but surely there was massive economic mismanagement in Ghana as well?"

Geoffrey Bing said:

> "I don't think so. Look at the basic figure which is that in 1954 the price of cocoa, which provides two-thirds of Ghana's exports, was £467 a ton; by July 1965 it had fallen to £87 a ton. If you think of, say, England, then suppose all you export are motor cars and you are selling them for £1,000 each and then the world says 'I'm sorry, but we can only buy them for £200'—that is the sort of thing that no economy can deal with."

This is of course an example of how the developed capitalist world, whose periodic crises are much milder than before the second world war, has succeeded in stabilising itself, to a relative extent, by imposing enormous crises on the underdeveloped world.

Made Safe for Profits

Every day that passes makes clear that one of the main aims of the Ghana military junta (which seized power on February 24th) was to dismantle the public sector of production which Dr. Nkrumah and his government was building up against tremendous odds. To achieve this the military rulers are doing their utmost to get more foreign investments from Britain, United States, and West Germany, and hold out the prospects of far bigger profits for the foreign monopolies.

This basic aim was made clear in the first public statement of the so-called National Liberation Council (NLC) on March 2nd. It emphasised that the private sector of production would be:

> ". . . the largest sector in terms of persons engaged and gross output". There would be "no plans for nationalisation, and all public corporations would be reviewed as a matter of urgency, and some turned back to the private sector".

As a first step the People's Trading Corporation was dissolved, as was also the United Ghana Farmers' Co-operative—whose functions were handed over to the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board. Instead of co-operatives (which were "involved in politics") there would be encouragement for "healthy competition", for this was judged to be the best inducement for "foreign interests".

When Mr. Omaboe (Chairman of the Economic Committee) came to London in June to meet Ghana's foreign creditors, he made clear they could have even bigger concessions. It was explained to them that already nine of the State corporations had been handed over to private owners, who were also invited to participate in six others. This was only the first step.

The next stage was to visit the United States. Mr. Omaboe took his four-man team there (these are the people who talk about "wasteful expenses") and spoke to the African-American Chamber of Commerce in New York. It was explained that Ghana was anxious to get more United States investments in manufacturing, commerce, agriculture, and mining—almost the whole economy! His complaint was:

> "Looking at the economic scene in Ghana over the past few years, one is vividly struck by the smallness of foreign capital inflow from the United States."

Having urged earlier a commercial delegation from Britain to Ghana, Mr. Omaboe now pleaded for a United States mission also "representing all types of business interests", and expressed the hope that "private United States investment will now take up the challenge which investment opportunities in Ghana offer them".

No wonder the London *Financial Times* (1.6.66) had earlier made clear that ". . . the new administration in Ghana . . . is of a type the West wants, in its own interests, to support". Despite all its earlier sensational accounts of Ghana's "economic bankruptcy" this financial journal knows that the military junta will enable the big tycoons to draw vast profits:

> ". . . whatever the immediate financial crisis, there are a number of basic sources of economic strength in Ghana: there is some comfort for creditors in this".

It went on to explain that big advances had been made in Ghana under Dr. Nkrumah, which could now be exploited more easily by foreign firms:

> "Again, Dr. Nkrumah's spending did leave something to show: the magnificent Volta river dam and associated works, an excellent (perhaps over-excellent) infrastructure, and one of the best-educated black populations in Africa."

More Millionaires

Who make the profits anyway? It would seem that our western world is getting more and more fit for millionaires.

The *U.S. News and World Report* (May 16th, 1966) estimates that an income of more than $1 million will be made this year by more than 500 Americans.

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This is income as reported for federal tax purposes; it excludes all tax-exempt income like the interest on many municipal bonds as well as one-half of long-term capital gains.

This is the highest number of millionaires reported since the famous "get-rich-quick year" of 1929 when the Wall Street crash opened the great crisis. The number of such individuals was only 145 in 1953 and 371 ten years later. Profit from investments is the major source of their income. Income from salaries accounted (in 1963) for only 2.1 per cent of it.

Tax avoidance, which is one of America's most endowed and developed "sciences" is reaching fantastic proportions in the United States. Most of the millionaires appear to be running "hobby" farms and other enterprises capable of making substantial losses to hold down income tax. Family Foundations abound. As the American Labor Research Association notes,[1] the most startling fact is that no less than 20 of the millionaires paid *no* income tax at all in 1963. If we include the tax-free interest that the millionaires' group received as well as the half of long-term gains not reportable, the overall tax rate of the group amounted to only about 25 per cent.

Philosophy of World Revolution

"The modern working class movement has grown strong on the basis of the conviction that socialism will follow capitalism as inevitably as capitalism followed feudalism. Is this correct?"

These are the opening words of a thought-provoking polemical study by Franz Marek, editor of *Weg und Ziel*, theoretical organ of the Austrian Communist Party, on the "Philosophy of World Revolution",[2] with the sub-title "Contribution to an Anthology of Theories of Revolution".

It is published by the Europa Verlag, which has already given us two most interesting works by Marxists, Ernst Fischer's *Necessity of Art* and Theodore Prager's *Economic Miracle or Nothing New*.

In the Preface, Franz Marek writes that his purpose is to discuss:

> "the main philosophical problem of the Marxist conception of history; the thesis of the inevitability of the socialist revolution; the ideas about it outlined by Marx and Engels; the way those ideas have developed and the conclusions which we must draw from present-day social developments."

His book, he says, is in some respects to be a sort of "Marxist spring-cleaning".

Marek traces the conception of laws of development in nature and society in the writings of philosophers from Descartes to Hegel. He then studies the approach to the subject by Marx and Engels. As part of his "anthology" he presents the views of social evolution and revolution of Marxists and non-Marxists of many varieties—Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg, Plekhanov, Bukharin, Stalin, Oskar Lange, Wright Mills, etc., stressing particularly how, despite oft-repeated warnings of Marx and Engels, the view of social evolution and revolution tended to be distorted into a frozen, mechanical conception of *inevitable* laws of history. Equally inevitably the question arose "if social advance is inevitable, why should it be fought for?"

A most interesting section treats the dangers of equating laws of development of society with laws of nature, and the contribution of Lenin to the development of a really dialectical view of historical development. Lenin, writes Marek, always answered the question "What Will Happen?" with the question "What is to be Done?".

Marek pays great attention to the treatment of this question by Antonio Gramsci who in his *Prison Notebooks* made profound criticisms of mechanical determinism.

Again and again, the author emphasises that it is man who makes history, that the action of men and classes is decisive for the development and determination of the historical process:

> "The idea of the law-governed character of development includes the idea that more and more people should become convinced of the necessity for this development." (p. 46)

Franz Marek, at the end of his book, indicates his own views of the way forward. We cannot, alas, follow him in detail here. But we would highly recommend this book for study by all readers of German, and strongly suggest an English translation for those who do not.

The Problem of Free Will

One of the issues that arises repeatedly in Franz Marek's book is the role of men in making their own history.

In this connection the question, the age-old question, is bound to arise "has man free will or not?" This is one of the most enduring and recurring questions that has, throughout history, exercised the minds of philosophers, theologians, and all thinking people.

A study of this problem from a Marxist point of view has recently been carried out by a Hungarian

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[1] *Economic Notes*, Vol. 34, No. 6.

[2] Franz Marek—*Philosophie der Weltrevolution: Beitrag zu einer Anthologie der Revolutionstheorien*, Europa Verlag, Vienna, 1966.

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philosopher—Tamas Földesi—and published (in English) by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.[3]

The first half of the book is a history of different approaches to free will throughout the history of philosophy with an attempt to relate the various approaches to the social conditions on which they arose.

The second half examines various aspects of the problem in the light of Marxism—problems of necessity and chance, of moral and criminal responsibility, of the relation of social laws to human volition.

The subject is a big one and the author and publishers modest. They merely express the hope that the study "will be found provocative of thought, and that the ensuing debates will contribute to the further elaboration of the theory of free will in Marxist philosophy".

Local Labour History

In these columns last month we drew attention to the work on local history being published by the Historical Association and commented on a number of studies dealing with radicalism and chartism.

We quoted the author of one such pamphlet, John Cannon, as saying that support for Chartism was never as strong in Bristol as in the much smaller neighbouring city of Bath.

Now from the History Group of the Communist Party comes a remarkable example of a local history study dealing with the Radicals and Chartists of that very city, in the first half of the 19th century.[4]

The author appears to have made a profound study of contemporary sources and more recent studies to which he brings a critical mind. Using the Marxist approach, he brings out clearly the character of Bath radicalism (advanced and highly successful in its day) and the relations between it and the Chartist movement. His explanation, substantiated by the date of the documents to which he refers, makes clear the inevitability of the clash between these ideologies, reflecting class forces that must finally oppose one another whatever temporary alliances may have been possible when confronting an enemy (the landlord class) common to both.

In Mr. Neale's study, local history not only contributes to our knowledge of 19th century British history, but also to our understanding of historical processes in general. This is as it should be but is rare enough to make this essay of special importance.

[3] Tamas Földesi—*The Problem of Free Will*, Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, 1966.

[4] Our History No. 42, *Class and Ideology in a Provincial City—Bath, 1800-1850*, by R. S. Neale.

Other Local Studies

Lest anyone should get the impression that this study of local history marks a new departure for "Our History" one should point out that it has been, in fact, a major concern of the History Group.

Quite a number of such studies have been published and some of them have been reprinted and are still available.

One of these is *Sheffield Shop Stewards 1916-1918* (Our History No. 18, first published in 1960) by Bill Moore, which draws upon interviews with and material supplied by men who played a leading part in the movement.

Another important study is *The General Strike in the North-East* (Our History No. 22, first published in 1961).

A third essay of this kind was the more recently published *Chartism in the Black Country 1850-1860* by George Barnsby (Our History No. 40, 1966). This provides, among other things, much material on the work of Ernest Jones.[5]

Starting on Friday

The film industry, often thought to be behind the times compared with that pushful youngster television, is in a mood for experiment. Quietly behind the scenes the marketing experts have been coming up with some proposals, which both take into account the public's existing cinema-going habits and promise to change them. At the end of May the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association heard that in the powerful London area "as an experiment" starting on Friday, July 1st, films on general release would start on Fridays, instead of on Sundays or Mondays. The idea is not new, something similar having been done in American cinemas, and the CEA was told by a delegate from Northern Ireland that a change to Friday in Dublin had proved very beneficial to the cinema industry.

The reasoning is that cinemas usually do very good business on Fridays and Saturdays and there are a number of advantages of getting this better business in during the opening of a film's run. "Word-of-Mouth" publicity by those who have seen the film is always an important factor, and obviously it is an advantage to get bigger attendances at the beginning of the run, rather than at the end, so that good reports can be greater. But, what if the film is not liked by the patrons? Despite any number of attempts by experienced film people, there is no way of reliably predicting whether a picture will catch on with the public—and publicity campaigns, however

[5] All the titles of "Our History" mentioned can be obtained from the Secretary, History Group, 16 King Street, W.C.2, at 2s. each (plus 4d. for postage).

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skilfully devised to draw the public, while very helpful, can never be guaranteed to "fool all of the people all of the time". When a film, starting its run on a Monday, does not seem to be doing well, there will always be the thought by the cinema owners that it can pick up reasonably well on the Friday and Saturday—so it is kept on. With a Friday start, the cinema owners can be more ruthless with a poor film by replacing it with a different one on the Monday, the second programme running only part of the week.

The new system will give the film industry greater flexibility, enabling it to plan on occasions to play programmes part of the week only. This will particularly suit the two monopoly cinema circuits, Rank and ABC—flexibility of release pattern will enable them now and again to give a showing to a film that has been made by a producer independent of their financial interests, and that will make them look less like ogres in the eyes of the Monopolies Commission. In fact, there is strong evidence that the Rank Organisation, particularly sensitive on the monopoly issue, earlier wanted the Friday programme start to apply to all its cinemas in the UK, and not just the London ones. A contributory factor in deciding to change the release is connected with the physical side of the distribution of the films, changing them from one cinema to another, at the weekends, when labour is more expensive, as well as perhaps being increasingly reluctant regularly to work at the weekends.

The Friday start and the greater flexibility programme will bring certain problems and further changes with them. The old system allows for either a Sunday or a Monday start, and in the case of the Monday start (where this is not due to local licensing arrangements that keep the cinema closed on the Sunday), the general release programme runs for six days with a special programme on the Sunday. Such are the habits of cinema-goers that Sunday audiences are quite often different—sometimes less sophisticated, sometimes perhaps preferring a double "X" Certificate horror programme. Under the new arrangements there will be changes, as it will not be practical to break the run of a programme just for a Sunday with the "Xs"; but perhaps this may not be such a handicap after all, as figures published in the film trade press in May show that there has been a decline in the number of "X" films over the past years. Only 77 feature films were given the "X" Certificate from the British Board of Film Censors, compared with 116 in the comparative period the previous year.

Silver Lining

Publicity and advertising play a most important part in the film industry, and the marketing authorities, where employed, and the industry chiefs who prefer to play it according to their experience, have both been expending increasing allocations in television advertising (as already explained in these notes)—because they find it pays them. For the successful use of the TV medium a large number of cinemas, all in the area covered by the commercial TV station, must all be showing the advertised programme at the same time; this is because TV advertising is comparatively expensive. Advertising, particularly on TV, has to be organised well ahead, and the practice of flexibility is going to present some problems in advertising—"word-of-mouth" does not help much at the beginning of the picture's run. However, the film industry has faced worse problems before now.

Board of Trade statistics for the first three months of the year indicate the continued ability of the industry to get more money out of diminishing audiences. During that period the estimated total admissions to UK cinemas were 75,700,000, compared with 82,500,000 for the same period in 1965. But gross box-office takings rose from an estimated £14,970,000 in the first thirteen weeks of 1965 to £16,180,000 this year, so it seems that every cloud has a silver lining—the silver coming from the pockets of the cinema's patrons.

Correction

There is an error of printing in the article by Ivor Montagu—*No Room for Homo sapiens?*—in the June issue of *Marxism Today*, p. 179, column 1, bottom line. The formula "x—y" should read "x—a".

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Science, Technology and Socialism*

Sam Lilley

HISTORIANS enjoy inventing catch-phrase titles that summarise the main characteristics of this or that period of history—the Bronze Age, the Dark Ages, the Industrial Revolution, the Age of Reason. One might wonder what phrase the historians of the future will use to describe us.

The Scientific Revolution?—perhaps. *The Automation Age*?—maybe. *The Dawn of the Age of Space*? Or, in Henry Wallace's phrase, *The Age of the Common Man*?

There would be a bit of truth in any one of these. But I think it is another aspect of our time that the future historian will want to emphasise. I believe he will refer to us as *The People who were Poor on Purpose*. If he can work out a shorter way of putting it, he'll refer to the mid-twentieth century as *The Age that Refused to be Rich*. Or maybe it will be *The Age of Wasted Opportunities*.

Opportunities Without Parallel

I think that is what our descendants will notice most about us. They will see—as we can see—that science and technology in our time are presenting mankind with opportunities that are quite without parallel in the past. But they will not be blinded—as most of us tend to be blinded—by the quite minor uses we have been making of these opportunities. They will see us as the first generation in the whole million years of humanity that had the means to make life rich and rewarding and exciting for everybody; but they will regretfully look back on us as the generation that threw most of these opportunities away for the sake of adhering to some outmoded habits of behaviour and for the sake of preserving the vested interests of a few useless drones.

It is hard to get a grasp of how enormous our opportunities are—of the wonderful things that we could do, if only we took the decisions to do them. The only way I know is to make comparisons between the technological progress of our time and that of past ages.

When one takes something that is happening today and asks the question, "When was the last time that something comparable happened?", the answer usually turns out to be:

> "At the beginning of the human story, when an ape-like creature was turning into man", or
>
> "At the beginning of agriculture, when man stopped being merely one animal among many, hunted as much as hunting, and started out on his long struggle to *master* the world he lived in", or
>
> "At the beginning of civilisation, some 5,000 years ago".

These are the three great revolutions of the past in human conditions. And all other changes that have happened in between turn out to be mere shifts of emphasis compared with these three.

And yet I hope to convince you that it is only by using to the full all three of these previous revolutions—the beginning of mankind, the beginning of agriculture, and the beginning of civilisation—that we can find comparisons for the changes that we are now living through.

Nuclear Energy

Take nuclear energy, for example. That involves releasing and controlling and using a fundamentally new type of natural force, millions of times more powerful than any our ancestors could command. Only once before have men gained control of a new type of natural force. And that was when those earliest men of all learned to harness fire to satisfy their needs. Everything that humanity has done since—from cookery and pottery to steam engines and electric power, radar and transistors, or the manufacture of terylene and tranquillisers—is just a matter of making gradually more skilful use of those same forces (electro-magnetic forces, as we now call them) that were released under human control in the first man-made fire.

We have been spending a million years working out the potentialities that were opened up by that ape-like creature who first dared to feed a fire, instead of running away from it. And now, with nuclear energy, we start on an era that will bring developments just as big again. But this time it will not take a million years. History is always speeding up, and it may need only a few generations to make our descendants as different from us, as we are from the first members of humanity. So to find a comparison for nuclear energy we have to invoke *half* of the first revolution of all—the other half, of course, being the practice of tool-making.

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* Substance of a lecture in the series on "Britain Today and Tomorrow", organised by *Marxism Today*, delivered at Caxton Hall on January 5th, 1966.

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The Computer Revolution

Or consider this outer space that we have started to explore, and will soon start to control for our own ends. Old Stone Age man did not control any space at all—he merely shared it in rivalry with all the other animals. It was with agriculture that man seriously started to master space—only a few fields here and there at first, but gradually extending his power until now he dominates the whole surface of the Earth. And just as agriculture initiated the process that made man Master of the Earth, so also Gagarin and his successors have started the process that will make man Lord of the Solar System and, in due course, of ever extending regions beyond.

On the way from agricultural barbarism to civilisation, men started to use machines to do the work of their muscles—the ox harnessed to plough and cart, the sailing ship, and so by slow steps to the water wheel, the steam engine and all the rest. That was machines to do muscle work. And now we have started to use machines to take over our brainwork as well. But perhaps that's not the best comparison for bringing out the significance of the computer revolution. Perhaps it is better to think of the computer as a *new tool of thought and communication.* And then we realise that human history has seen the invention of only two mental tools of comparable significance. One was spoken language—which was an inevitable consequence of the tool-making which (along with fire) separates man from the apes, for it is only through language that tools can effectively be used co-operatively. The other was writing and written mathematics—the most striking novelty introduced by the change from barbarism to civilisation. In a word, to find a comparison for those computers that are still rather less than twenty years old, we must make use of the main mental achievements of two out of our three major revolutions of the past.

And so one could go on. But not to drag out the list indefinitely, let me just add that if agriculture, medicine and the other biological techniques have not yet thrown up changes as great as those that came with the beginning of agriculture, then that is only because biology is more complicated than physics and chemistry and takes a little longer. The knowledge of the chemical basis of life, which we are now getting from molecular biology and related studies, must soon lead to a new level of control of living processes that will have effects even more dramatic than those which followed when the first agriculturists started on their crude manipulation of their living environment.

"Scientific Harvest"

Yet all these things are only particular manifestations of something much greater—of science and a technology based on science. Science, in *one* of its aspects, is simply a systematic way of inventing. Man had always invented, but he did so largely by grasping opportunities when they occurred, rather than creating them. Then in the 17th century a few pioneering spirits came to understand that if one undertook fundamental investigations of the laws of nature, and then looked around to see how one's knowledge might be usefully applied, this process of invention could be systematised and enormously speeded up. The seed they sowed took a long time to mature, but now we are beginning to reap the main harvest. A few early crops have been garnered from time to time, but it is only in the past twenty years that the fruits of this Scientific Revolution have become fully ripe. And see how fast we are gathering them in! The space age is less than nine years old. Automation only began to make serious strides after the War. The first electronic computer started working in 1946, the first nuclear power station in 1954. If the historian of the future were not so distressed at the way we waste our opportunities, he would label our time as "The Scientific Harvest".

This science—this systematic procedure for understanding, and hence for controlling, nature—is, of course, completely without precedent in human history. And that is why the technological change of our time is also, when you sum it all up, completely without precedent. The instances I gave earlier (to say nothing of the dozens I left unmentioned) are enough to show that the science-based progress of the last twenty years is comparable in magnitude to the combined technological achievement of the three greatest revolutions of the past—and perhaps even exceeds the total of *all* technological advance of earlier times. And this is *only the beginning* of the Harvest of Science. There is much, much more to come.

The consequences of this vast and rapid change must be equally far reaching. Trying to foresee them would be as thankless a task as trying in 7000 B.C. to predict what the agricultural revolution of that time would imply for 1966. But there is one consequence that stands out clearly, and it is the one that has the greatest significance for us. It is the one that—if we were sensible—would influence every thought we think and every deed we do for the next few generations. It is simply this: *that this Technological Revolution offers us the opportunity of increasing our material prosperity at a rate which would have been quite inconceivable at any time in the past.*

Nuclear developments, after a disappointingly slow start, now promise us the prospect of virtually inexhaustible power supplies becoming available well within the space of one generation, and growing progressively cheaper. Progress in the past has been limited by the energy we could command—first only

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our own muscles, then step by step the power of animals, of wind and water, coal and oil. And now the prospect of virtually unlimited nuclear power offers us the hope—if we do not use it to destroy ourselves—of virtually unlimited increases in wealth.

Automation, in spite of its youth, has gone far enough to assure us that almost any productive task can be automated. Even now it offers enormous increases in the productivity of labour. Even when we take into account all the *indirect* labour involved —in making the machinery and maintaining it, in management and auxiliary services and all the rest— we find that automation at its present level multiplies the *overall* productivity of labour by a factor of two or three. Soon it will do better. The opportunities for increasing the wealth at our disposal are stupendous.

Computers can plan a factory's production processes far more skilfully than any human production manager, giving maximum efficiency and minimum waste. Experimental work in the Soviet Union has gone far enough to show that they will soon be able to make big improvements in the planning of an entire economy. By abolishing the weary hours that the scientist spends on calculating or collating data or searching for references, they can further speed up the rate of scientific and technological progress. They can relieve us of mental drudgery, leaving us free to devote the unique powers of the human mind to constructive and creative work that is really worthy of it. And so computers, too, offer us great potential increases in wealth.

And so we could continue. Agricultural advances (which will surely go much faster when molecular biology has done its job), new methods of shaping metals, synthetic materials that allow one to do a better and more lasting job with less work—all these and many more give us the opportunity of increasing material prosperity far, far faster than ever before.

Attainable Reality

Of course I cannot give any accurate estimate of how quickly the world could grow rich if it made full use of all these opportunities. But various rough calculations can be done. And they all converge to suggest that it would now be possible to *double* the output of wealth per head *every ten years*—and go on doubling it decade after decade. This means that the output of wealth per head could be multiplied by 4 in 20 years, by 8 in 30 years, by 16 in 40 years.

As a result, the poorest parts of today's world could reach within this century a standard of living comparable with that of Western Europe today— though only if they were helped much more generously than at present from the abundant resources that the advanced countries would be rapidly accumulating. If poverty exists anywhere on Earth in the year 2000, the fault will not lie in our lack of ability, but in our lack of will, to eliminate it. And by that time the present advanced countries could provide for all their people a standard of living some four or five times its present average level in return for a twenty-hour working week.

With a two-fold improvement to follow every ten years thereafter, we can surely say that *the World of Plenty and the World of Ample Leisure is in sight.* This is where our time is absolutely unique. Men of other eras could only dream of a Golden Age when all would be comfortably provided for. Now the age-old dream has turned into an attainable reality.

Furthermore, within this century in the advanced countries and a few decades later elsewhere, life will have reached the point at which the business of getting a living will have sunk to the status of an unimportant detail, and people will devote their time and energy to those higher activities that we have always—in theory—regarded as the proper things for men and women to do. This is a theme that I should dearly like to expand. But there is no space. So I simply put it on record that I am not preaching some gross gospel of over-filled bellies and luxury cars and colour TV. I want wealth for all, so that all may forget about the need for acquiring wealth—so that the bodies and minds and spirits of all mankind may develop to the full in the creative joys that are dimly foreshadowed at present in the lives of a few privileged intellectuals. This is the gospel I want to preach—that science and technology have at last brought us to the point that *could be* the beginning of the truly constructive and creative era of human history. Science and technology have brought us to the point where we *could*—if only we would act sensibly together—stop worrying about the base business of getting a living, and start at last to explore the experience of living itself.

Science Not Used

Those are the opportunities that are open to us today. This is what we *could do.* But the actual reality of what we *are doing* is very very different. The world is *not* using science and technology to advance quickly into the land of plenty; it is making sadly small progress towards the time when the creative human spirit will at last have the chance to flower.

Where the need is greatest—in the vast underdeveloped areas of Africa, Southern Asia and Central and South America, where poverty is an ever-present reality—progress is at the best very slow. Many of these countries are having almost no success at all in their efforts to rise out of their misery. Some of them are actually becoming poorer year by year, as the imperialist powers take more out of them in profits than the meagre amounts they provide as economic and technical aid.

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And what about industrially developed countries like our own? Of course, we have known for a long time that things are not going entirely well with us. Yet many of us felt that, if we were not doing perfectly, we were at least doing fairly well. The standard of living, we felt, was at least creeping upwards. The Welfare State had, at any rate, eliminated abject poverty. We had "never had it so good". I am sure that you were shocked, as I was, to read on the day before last Christmas Eve the report by Abel-Smith and Townsend which shows that there are still 7½ million people in this country who are living below the poverty line. This poverty line is defined as 40 per cent above those very meagre National Assistance scales, with rent added in. That is a level at which people can spare nothing for any higher concern than just keeping alive. And yet 7½ million people in Britain—one-seventh of our entire population—are being forced to exist below that level. If one turns to the poorest of all—those who live on less than the National Assistance scale plus rent—they still number two million, or nearly four per cent of the population. And these people who live in miserable poverty include six or seven hundred thousand children—five per cent of the child population.

Worse still, it is *not* the case—as we had been hoping—that poverty is at least being slowly eliminated. On the contrary, the number of the abjectly poor, the number who have to live below the National Assistance level, *increased* from about 600,000 in 1953 to about two million in 1960. What a terrible contrast between opportunity and reality! We could double the standard of living in ten years. We actually *treble* the number of the miserably poor in *seven* years.

That is why they will call us "The Age that Refused to be Rich".

What of the Future?

And what of the future? When we look beyond the euphemisms about a "stable economy" and an "incomes policy", we discover that the next few years are to bring us no rapid approach to prosperity, but on the contrary we are to be subjected, at the hands of our elected representatives, to a planned decline in the standard of living—"The People who were Poor on Purpose".

But maybe you feel that Britain has special troubles. All right! Let us take America, the land of golden opportunities. Here is the one country in the world with all the material advantages, the one country with all the resources needed to achieve the rates of progress suggested above. And the Americans have *one-fifth* of their population below the poverty line. Their standard of living is rising, certainly, but very slowly. At the current rate, the standard of living of the American industrial worker will take fifty years to double its present value—fifty years, instead of the ten that should be easy for the Americans. And that is for the comparatively prosperous industrial workers. Do not forget the squalor of so much of their rural life. And do not forget the unemployed.

It is only in the socialist countries that economic progress goes on at something like the rate that is possible. Even they fall short of the ideal, partly because of inexcusable political errors and serious mistakes in planning, partly because they live in a hostile world that forces them to devote to armaments the resources that they would prefer to use for constructive purposes. But at least their progress has been fast enough to show that the figures which I've been suggesting are not pie in the sky. In the USSR *per capita* national income does double in the ten-year period. Till recently their standard of living has been rising more slowly—because the policy has been to invest for the future. But real income per head rose by 7 per cent during 1965, and is to rise by a further 30 per cent in the period 1966-70. At that rate it will only take 13 years to double the standard of living—which, in the conditions of today, is not a bad shot at the ten-year target.

So here is the situation in summary. It would be possible to double the standard of living every ten years. The socialist world is advancing at something approaching that pace. The developed capitalist countries continue to make progress, but much more slowly than would be possible. And they continue to tolerate quite unjustifiable poverty, *and* this poverty is now increasing. The underdeveloped countries, by and large, are having almost no success in their efforts to reach even a tolerable standard of living. What is actually being achieved in the world as a whole falls abysmally short of what science and technology make possible. We are, and future generations will certainly call us, the Age of Wasted Opportunities.

But *why*? Why are we so carelessly throwing away our chances? I think there's no great mystery about the answer to that question. I think the answer can be quite adequately summed up in three words: *Capitalism and War.*

Wastefulness of Capitalism

Please let us be clear on one point: I am not against capitalism, any more than I am against beer. I am all for beer at the right time—but not when I am driving a car. I am in favour of capitalism at the right time—but not when we are driving the motor-car of technology as fast as we can towards the Land of Plenty. Capitalism did a wonderful job in its day. Three hundred years ago it came into a world that was everywhere not much above the level of the underdeveloped countries of today, and it provided

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the economic machinery for bringing *part* of that world within sight of the Land of Plenty. And capitalism created this science which now promises us the possibility of advancing so much farther and faster.

Capitalism was in fact very well suited for its particular job in history—the job of taking a world that lived constantly on the verge of scarcity and starvation, and bringing part of it within sight of the land flowing with milk and honey. Capitalism was an excellent system, *in the right circumstances, at the right time*. But now its time is past.

Its time is past for the very simple reason that its economic machinery, which could deal so well with the problems of universal scarcity, is the wrong sort of machinery for dealing with the problems of potential plenty. As science and advancing technology make wealth more and more abundantly available, the market mechanism breaks down. It becomes more and more difficult to sell the goods you make. And if you cannot sell what you make now, then there is no incentive to improve your technology to make more.

If we had not had the experience, we should find it hard to believe that such an absurd situation could arise—a situation in which millions of people desperately need more goods; in which technology has provided the means of manufacturing the goods they need; and in which, nevertheless, the distribution of purchasing power (arranged to suit the interests of the privileged few) is such that those who need the goods cannot buy them, and so those who could make the goods must refrain from doing so. The situation is so absurd that it is hard to believe it could happen. And yet we know from bitter experience that it does happen. And that is why capitalism cannot bring us to the Land of Plenty.

That is why automation in the capitalist countries does not lead automatically to a better life for all, but on the contrary faces us with the threat of unemployment. In 1955 the American automobile industry undertook an extensive programme of automation. From an engineering point of view, this was a great leap forward. It led to the production of eight million cars that year, against a previous best of 6,600,000. But the market could not absorb so many. A million of these cars stood unsold. There could be only one result—general cutting back of production, wholesale dismissals of workers. Unemployment in the industry rose to 200,000—a quarter of the total labour force—and those 200,000 jobs have never come back again.

If things have not been so bad in other capitalist countries, if in Britain, for example, automation has only led to unemployment of a few tens of thousands now and again, that is merely because these other capitalist economies have not dared to automate very much; they avoid the unemployment, but only by forgoing the benefits that automation could bring.

What happened in the car industry has also been happening in other American industries. Productivity increases have consistently outrun market expansion, with the result that unemployment has been growing steadily worse. In the boom year of 1953 it was less than 3 per cent. Three booms later in 1963 it had risen to 5.7 per cent. After that the war in Vietnam intervened to bring the unemployment rate down to just under 4 per cent this spring. But this old familiar way of dealing with the unemployment problem can have only a temporary effect. When the peaceful forces of the world put an end to the rape of Vietnam—as they certainly will—then the trend of rising unemployment will be resumed, and will continue till the American people come to understand how they are being tricked.

All this has another side, too. If men and women are unemployed, then the wealth that they could be producing is not being produced. From 1956 to 1963 America's factories never worked at even 90 per cent of their capacity, and the figure twice dropped below 80 per cent. If a tenth or a fifth of the plant is not being used, the potential benefits that technology could bring are being thrown away. The time when there will be plenty for all is being postponed into the more distant future.

Nor is that all. The American economy—and to a lesser extent this is true of other capitalist economies—only manages to keep going through a fantastic process of organising purposeful wastefulness. People are being constantly urged, by callous advertising programmes, to scrap cars and washing machines that could well be used for many more years and to buy new ones which are no better, simply in order to keep up the profits of the manufacturers. They are persuaded to spend hundreds of dollars each on useless gadgets that will stand idle in their homes, but will solve the marketing problems of some gadget manufacturer. They cannot buy a simple article of food without having to pay a few cents extra for elaborate, and mostly useless, packaging, which is then thrown straight into the dustbin. Worse still, industry has a considered policy of "built-in obsolescence"—highly talented engineers are employed, not to improve the quality of a product, but to make sure that it will quickly wear out and fall to pieces, so that the consumer must buy another. Goods that are intentionally wasted in all these ways might just as well never have been manufactured at all. The real wealth produced is much less than the statistics show. Yet this wastefulness, ruthlessly organised whatever it may cost humanity, is what keeps the American economy going.

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And if I have put the emphasis on America, because it is that country that has achieved the greatest efficiency in organising waste, still we all know that the same things are true in somewhat lesser degree in Britain and in every other capitalist country.

These future historians may not even bother to dub us "The Age of Wasted Opportunities". They may well save their breath and simply call us "The Age of Waste".

The Worst Waste—War

I have, of course, omitted from my list the worst waste of all—the huge amount of manpower and productive capacity that is every year poured down the drain of war and war preparation. That subject shall have separate treatment shortly. The point I want to make now is that the capitalist economies only manage to keep going, and to make their very slow and hesitant progress, by this huge process of organised wastefulness. And what we waste in all these ways is just what the backward parts of the world need to drag themselves out of poverty. Surely in a world that still contains starving millions, this process of living by wasting is sheer callousness.

But even if we lay aside such humanitarian considerations, even if we think entirely in terms of self-interest, those peoples who still tolerate capitalism are being foolish in the extreme. If we gave up our armaments expenditure, stopped our organised waste and used our productive capacity to the full, then *right at this moment* America would be in a position to provide all her citizens with the material wealth needed for a full and happy life. And with the ten-year doubling period, we in Britain are only ten or fifteen years behind. We are standing at the gateway to the Land of Plenty, and we refuse to go in. We refuse to go in, simply to preserve the vested interests of a few monopoly capitalists who grow steadily more and more uselessly opulent at the expense of their poorer brothers.

So what is to be done? A sensible world would of course note that capitalism has done a useful job in the past, but in the changed conditions of today has become obsolete. So it would pay a suitable tribute of thanks to the old system, and then change as quickly as possible to a socialist economy in which these troubles do not occur, and in which—even in the imperfect examples of today—expansion does take place at something approaching the rate that science and technology make possible. To sensible people that would seem no more strange than the step of deciding, after the development of the car, to change from winding country lanes to motorways. That is what good sense would dictate.

Unfortunately the world is not ruled by good sense, but by vested interest. There are those who benefit from the maintenance of the present system; and like all ruling and exploiting classes of the past, they will do anything to keep their privileges. And so the possibility of a good life for all is postponed indefinitely to preserve the profits of the few.

Worse still, the defence of the old system is no longer a question of capitalists and monopolists and their political servants resisting the advance of the working people in their own country. The struggle has become international. The fact that a third of the world's people have chosen the path of socialism strikes fear unto the hearts of the reactionaries. In the vain hope of reversing the trend, they create the Cold War, and the many little Hot Wars (which must seem far from little to the people of Vietnam), and the ever present threat of World War.

And even if the hydrogen bombs are never dropped and the Polaris missiles never fired, we are still paying a terrible price for the Cold War. Britain lags in the application of computers to the control of industrial processes; and a good part of the reason lies in the fact that our most powerful computer is taking charge of the fire-control system of a warship. A few million pounds' worth of electronic control devices could make revolutionary improvements in our industrial efficiency; but some fifteen million pounds' worth of these control devices were installed in 1964 in a single aircraft carrier. One of the main reasons why the Americans have lagged behind for so long in the exploration of space is that they were far too interested in developing space as a new battlefield. The rockets that the Pentagon wants for intercontinental ballistic missiles are too small to be efficient as space launchers. With military influence paramount, the Americans concentrated in building the rockets the Armed Forces demanded, and tried to make do with these even for the *Mercury* manned flights. It was only about 1959, when they had been thoroughly frightened by Soviet successes, that they took seriously the question of building rockets really fit for a space-age job. And so it was only last year that they began to make a serious contribution to the conquest of space.

The enormous effort that has gone into developing nuclear weapons has probably meant a good ten years of delay in the advent of economic nuclear power. In 1962 the American Government spent £2,800 million on military research and development, while we in Britain spent £246 million. About a quarter of our qualified scientists and engineers are employed on military projects. While some peaceful "fall-out" arises from this perversion, it is clear that the main effect is simply to reduce drastically the effort put into the constructive development of science and technology.

In any case, if the advance of technology is to bring us to the Land of Plenty, it is not enough that

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new techniques should be invented and developed. They must be applied in practice to create new industry, better agriculture and all the rest. This requires capital; and everywhere progress is being held back because too little capital is available. Yet the world spends about £40,000 million pounds a year on war and preparation for war—and incidentally *half* of that total is spent by the USA. £40,000 million a year for war—more than the combined national incomes of all the countries of Asia, Africa and Central and South America. It has been calculated that if even only a third of this armaments expenditure could be given instead to the underdeveloped countries—in the form of new factories and equipment, scientific and technical advice, new schools and colleges and the staff to get them started, and all the other essentials of an industrial civilisation—then their progress could be so speeded up that they would take only a few decades to reach standards comparable with those of Western Europe today.

"The Beginning of Plenty"?

And so the struggle for peace is not just an effort to avoid being blown to pieces by nuclear bombs. It is also part of the effort to use technology rationally to bring mankind quickly to the Land of Plenty. And I think we may be very near to a crucial victory in this field. If all of us—and the millions like us throughout the world—can add our voices very noisily to the very real economic and military pressures that are already forcing the Americans to think twice about Vietnam, then this year could see that unfortunate country at last cleared of foreign invaders and choosing her own way of life in conformity with the Geneva Agreements. And if the peace forces succeed in demonstrating, in this test case, that aggression does not pay and that democracy means choosing for oneself, not choosing what the Americans want, then I think that it is better than an even bet that nobody will ever again embark on the adventure of trying to impose an ideology and a political system by force.

And then that £40,000 million a year—something like £13 a year for every man, woman and child on Earth—will be available for the purpose of at least alleviating the worst of the world's poverty. We shall have begun the serious business of the final march into the Land of Plenty. More than that. When it is no longer possible for the old order to impose its will by force, ever increasing sections of the world will choose to follow the path of socialism—the straight road to plenty. And let *us* not be the last among them. Let us face the fact that plenty for all is now possible, but that to attain it we need a socialist Britain. And on that basis let us act.

Future historians may call the nineteen-forties, fifties and sixties "The Age that Refused to be Rich", or "The Age of Wasted Opportunities". But it *could be* that they will call the seventies and after "The Beginning of Plenty". It *could be*—if we, the people, decide to sweep away the vested interests that keep the old order in being. It *could be* that our descendants will read in their history textbooks about how the people of the later twentieth century at last took seriously the task of ensuring material plenty for all, and went on from there to develop to the full the creative spirit of man.

It *could be so.*

Let us act now in such a way as to ensure that it *will be so.*

Poland—New Developments

Jozef Pajestka

Director of the Planning Institute, Warsaw, Poland

POLAND, like some other socialist countries, is in the course of changing the tools of its economic policy; this, in consequence, means changing the ways of working of economic organisations, and to a certain degree of the whole economy.

The process of reforms in our country is rather a process of trial and experiment than an endeavour to build up a "model" based on new theoretical or ideological premises. The changes are founded mainly on practical observations of the functioning of the economy in changing social and economic conditions. The scope of experience is much wider than that of one country, for it derives from the practice of other socialist countries as well. In these countries ways and means similar to those applied in Poland have been used to produce similar economic and social effects.

Introduction of reforms in the system of planning and management started in Poland around 1956-1957, when the centralised system was subjected to strong criticism and the efforts to find new solutions were very often undertaken directly by indus-

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trial enterprises. This was not accidental, and it reveals certain interesting aspects of the functioning of the centralised planning system.

The Centralised System of Planning

The centralised planning and management system was introduced in Poland in the years 1949-1950. It was founded mainly on the application of methods and tools developed in the Soviet Union, and was introduced together with an ambitious plan of accelerated industrialisation—the Six-Year Plan, 1950-1955.

Looking at that system in retrospect one has to stress that, despite a number of shortcomings, it had great significance for the solution of many problems essential for the economic and social progress of the country. On the economic plane it was, no doubt, of real importance for the creation of structural conditions which made it possible to attain and maintain a high rate of growth of national income. On the social plane it enabled us to liquidate unemployment, to diminish to a considerable degree the differences in income distribution; and it favoured the development of education facilities for wide social strata, the development of social services, etc. As regards its economic effects, it is enough to point out that during 1950-1958 our economy achieved an average rate of growth of national income of about eight per cent per year, and this seems to be a proof of the general efficiency of the system.

These economic and social achievements provided many a strong argument for the defence of the centralised planning and management system. This, it seems, is also an explanation of a certain caution in undertaking reforms of the system at a time when there already existed a rather broad social conviction of the need for them.

The Need for Reform

To understand the differences of opinion about the need to introduce more radical reforms into the planning system, it seems essential to indicate that in a centrally planned and managed system—directed towards a maximum utilisation of the economy's potentialities—great achievements on a general economic scale are accompanied by many negative economic and social features on a micro-economic level. It is rather difficult in this article to give an explanation of this kind of phenomenon. They are, however, a well known fact which can be explained. So, on the one hand, the system was giving rise to great economic achievements and, on the other, it could be blamed for wastefulness and unused possibilities in industrial plants, disturbances in the co-operation of industries, difficulties on the market, etc. In addition it did not favour a wide development of social initiative. The accumulation of this kind of experience and the awareness of its nature and causes coincided with the rise of skills and of the social maturity of the people. And it began to bring about the growing social conviction that deeper reforms of the system were inevitable.

In fact, the reforms were carried out rather on the basis of general economic considerations. In the process of the country's development it was becoming more and more clear that the importance of the basic factors of economic dynamics set in motion by the centralised system for general economic and social progress was diminishing. The centralised system displayed great efficiency in raising the volume of capital investment, in securing a great expansion of employment opportunities, as well as in the field of structural transformation of the economy. For most of the socialist countries these factors were of primary importance for the acceleration of economic growth. In the course of time, however, the importance of these factors diminished. In consequence the rate of output growth diminished. In Poland, for instance, while during the first half of the fifties the national income grew on an average more than 8 per cent per year, the rate of growth in the years 1958-1964 dropped to about 5 per cent yearly. In some other countries the decrease of the rate of growth was still greater.

Without going into details to prove the necessity of more radical reforms and analysing the factors setting them in motion, one can state the following. The reforms in our country, changing the organisation of the instruments of economic policy, are necessary from an economic and social point of view. Therefore, they are also a political necessity. The tendencies shown in the reforms should be understood as objective trends, shaped in the system of socialist production relations by the changing social and economic conditions. They should be discussed from this viewpoint first of all, and not only on the plane of general theoretical premises.

Planning and Social Initiative

Our socio-economic system relies on planning, which is a basic principle of its functioning. Society-wide planning may, however, be realised in different forms and with the application of different "rules" in regard to the relationships between various economic units and agencies of the state economic apparatus, the social and economic incentives, etc. The conclusion that planning can be carried out in various forms and with the application of various instruments can already be drawn from the relatively short historical experience of the socialist countries, and it can be expected that its contents will be further enriched in the future.

One of the main lessons derived from our planning experience is that, in the endeavour to find the most suitable and efficient forms of planning, it is of the

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utmost importance to base planning on the broad initiative of the various economic organisations. This, then, has become a general line of the changes in our planning system. It follows from premises of an economic as well as of a social character.

The role of social initiative cannot be limited in a socialist economy to "ways and methods of the fulfilment of the plan". In a system where planning is a basic method of organising socio-economic activities, utilisation of wide social initiative is of primary importance. There can be no "optimal" plan, even when this is based on the most perfect methods of central planning, for no central plan can take into consideration all the various initiatives and actions of individuals and social groups.

Someone might observe that the above statements were long ago acknowledged as valid for socialist planning. Not all are fully aware of the fact, however, that a centrally planned and managed system has not created in practice suitable conditions for the wide utilisation of social initiative in the planning process. Though this problem has many aspects, one of them merits special attention. As a matter of fact, the centrally planned and managed system developed in our countries did not create the necessary prerequisites for rational economic choice, and therefore for rational planning at plant level and to some extent also at industry level. As a consequence, the initiative of the various organisations in the planning process lacked rationality and could be of very limited value. The contribution, therefore, of the numerous economic organisations to the formulation of the overall plan was of very narrow significance.

This was a result of the wide application of the criterion of plan fulfilment as a governing principle of appraisal of the economic performance of enterprises and other organisations. Deficiencies of the price system and other features of the management system were also of significance in this respect.

The compulsory character of plan-figures and the dependence of material incentives on plan fulfilment were basic characteristics of centralised planning and management. This practice has been sanctioned in a general "theoretical" principle that in a socialist economy the plan is an obligatory law. Life did not always and universally confirm this principle as valid. It has to be acknowledged that in definite historical circumstances, when it was necessary to impose upon the economy a new structure and to draw it out "by force" from the state of economic underdevelopment, the use of compulsory methods and therefore the compulsory character of the plan may have been justified. It was not right, however, to transform this practice, which was reasonable under definite circumstances, into a firm and generally valid canon. This principle already long hampered the endeavour to reform the planning and management system.

Practical experience has provided sufficiently conclusive evidence to show that a plan with absolute and detailed directives combined with material incentives for plan fulfilment, makes it difficult to use social initiative in planning to the full extent, leads to the development of bureaucratic practice in planning, deprives the economy of elasticity, and does not create the most favourable conditions for economic and technological progress.

Plan Targets

In Poland, for a few years already, a process of drawing away from a plan with general and detailed directives has been under way. This tendency has been particularly fostered by industrial enterprises that considered it a most important approach for liquidating bureaucratic practices in planning and eliminating the obstacles standing in the way of their own initiative. It was in 1957 that, for the first time, the number of plan-targets set for enterprises was radically reduced. For reforms now carried out it has also been accepted that the number of plan-targets, i.e. of obligatory plan-directives, should be reduced. It is not proposed to eliminate plan-targets completely, but to restrict them and to substitute economic instruments. Diminishing use of plan-targets is considered to be a process and not a one-day reform.

The negative aspects of the use of central plan-targets were due, to a considerable extent, to the adoption of the criterion of plan fulfilment for the appraisal of economic performance of various organisations. It was with the promotion of material incentives and their close connection with plan fulfilment that this criterion got full play. From observation of its practical operation one can state the following. A correct and objective participation of economic organisations in the planning process cannot be expected if one applies the criterion of plan-fulfilment for appraisal of their performance. In any case the experience of our country seems to show in a sufficiently convincing way that the operation of this criterion as a governing principle makes it very difficult, if possible at all, to utilise fully the social initiative of economic organisations in the planning process. It generates tendencies to hide the economic potential of firms and other organisations, to misshape, even to falsify, planning information, it gives place to subjective, wishful factors, etc. This experience seems to show that one has rather to choose between the application of this criterion or the use of sound, creative social initiative in planning. From the experience gained so far, one can state that to reconcile one with the other is very difficult, if possible at all.

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One could argue that the application of this criterion might yield results in certain definite circumstances. Its application presupposes, however, that plans can be elaborated in a sufficiently correct way by central organisations. Such organisations cannot expect that industrial plants or other economic organisations to which this criterion is applied will collaborate objectively and impartially in plan preparation. Such a system becomes more complicated if this criterion applies to different levels of the planning and management apparatus. Then, objective criteria appear on the central level only, while on the lower levels "tactical" criteria prevail. This kind of planning system makes it immensely difficult to organise a society-wide process of planning. It is hard to expect, in these circumstances, a straightforward and sincere dialogue, impartial estimates and proposals, true and correct information about the existing potentialities, and all that is closely connected with a sound participation of various economic organisations in the planning process.

Gradual Reform

In the reforms carried on in Poland a clear tendency appears to abandon the criterion of plan fulfilment for appraisal of the economic performance of economic organisations. In a small number of cases, however, this criterion and the dependence of economic incentives on plan fulfilment has been maintained. This line of change too is rather a process than a one-day reform.

A thorough change in the criteria applied to economic organisations has proved to be a very complicated problem, the solution of which requires deep reforms. While critical comments on the criteria so far applied are easy and clear, the finding of positive solutions is a very difficult matter which is connected with all the essential problems of functioning of the economy—with the price system, the use of market mechanism, with foreign trade relations, etc. That is why we prefer rather to rely on experiments, partial and gradual changes, than on a sudden change of methods, instruments, institutions, etc. It is expected that after the correctness and efficacity of the various new measures are confirmed, further new measures will be applied. The strategy of partial and gradual changes has, however, also certain negative aspects.

Limitation of plan targets and of the criterion of plan fulfilment will bring positive economic and social results only if satisfactorily working economic mechanisms and instruments are substituted for them. Such are, first of all, the question of "khozraschot" (cost-accounting) connected with the profit criterion, of correct pricing, of application of self-financing, etc. These are the areas on which the reforms under way in our country are focused.

It is impossible to go into a detailed description of the various solutions developed. But it seems necessary to draw the reader's attention to certain general characteristics of the reforms undertaken.

A salient feature of the reforms lies in the application of economic mechanisms on a larger scale than was practised in the past. The scope of working of the mechanisms is limited, however, mainly to current adjustments between production and needs. Thus, in place of setting production targets, direct links between producers and customers are developed, together with a mechanism of mutual adjustments. This course has been under way for a few years in our country, and it has brought positive results.

In order to make this mechanism—which, let us state clearly, is of a market type—work efficiently and in the interest of the society, it is considered necessary to apply it consistently and to control its operation. In Poland, the reform does not assume a free play of market forces, but it accepts conscious use of the market mechanism in order to facilitate the mutual adjustments of current activities of the various economic organisations.

It is important to indicate that there is a significant limitation of the scope of working of the market mechanism. Thus, where it is considered that the essential interest of the society might be menaced and that market relationships do not permit the making of correct economic decisions, the market mechanism is eliminated. To the first domain, it has been accepted, belong employment and wages policy; and to the second—capital investment and foreign trade. New economic measures are drafted for those fields as for all the others, but it is accepted that long-term economic calculations and general socio-economic criteria should be followed for making the main choices in those fields.

Central Control

When speaking of the wider admission of economic mechanisms to our economy, one has to bear in mind certain important features of their operation.

Firstly, the mechanisms ensuring greater flexibility and more economical management operate, as already mentioned, above all in the field of current adjustments of economic activities. The main structural choices, long-run directions, etc., are established with the help of planning studies and realised with the help of investment policy, employment and educational policy, etc.

Secondly, the mechanisms do not operate spontaneously, but are regulated by the state which holds all the essential tools of economic policy, e.g. prices.

Thirdly, the state and other organisations have

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great possibilities for analysing and controlling the activities of the various organisations. More than that—the planning system enables the planning information, concerning intentions, undertakings, etc., of all economic units to be obtained. This makes it possible to take action in all instances when the course of activity is in contradiction with more general social interests.

Fourthly, it must be remembered that in our country there exist various and effective socio-political means of action.

Taking all that into account, there is one thing one can be sure of—the central controls as foreseen in the reform are not weak.

The Socialist Poems of William Morris

Jessie Kocmanova

(Jessie Kocmanova, of Scottish parentage, is now a lecturer at the University of Brno in Czechoslovakia. She has written a book on William Morris and articles on Cunninghame Graham, George Gissing, Hugh MacDiarmid, etc.)

MORRIS'S conversion to revolutionary socialism, which sprang from his activities in practical politics towards the end of the eighteen-seventies, has been shown convincingly by Edward Thompson to be no regrettable aberration from the paths of literature and the arts, but the central and most deeply-felt event of his whole life. It is true that immediately before and immediately afterwards he wrote little or no poetry. This was partly lack of inspiration[1]; and partly the feeling that English poetry had lost its immediacy. In 1883 he expressed his opinion that poetry "has now become unreal: the arts have got to die, what is left of them, before they can be born again."[2] Thompson has suggested that "The great intellectual effort of his lectures must have exposed to him the facility of much of his verse."[3] Morris's own severe criticism of the "flabbiness" of some of his poetry is well known.[4] Yet it was not so much problems of form that led Morris to neglect poetic composition for a while, as rather the conviction that logical exposition in prose was now his paramount duty.

Morris's socialism was and remained revolutionary, for he perceived that only social revolution could change corrupt capitalist society. It was his recognition of the class war that brought him in 1883 to join the only existing body with a Marxist programme, the Democratic, later Social Democratic Federation. Up till then, he had no formal knowledge of socialist or Marxist economic theory[5], but immediately began to study Marx and other theorists to such good purpose that by 1884 he wrote, along with Hyndman, a *Summary of the Principles of Socialism*, which is at once a historical survey, a statement of Marxist principles, and a reasoned political programme. This was published for the Democratic Federation as a cheap, paper-back pamphlet, the cover of which bears a pen-and-ink design of interwined leaves, obviously the work of Morris himself. He laid all his gifts with complete generosity at the service of socialism, and this included his gift of poetry.

The Socialist Cause

From now on to the end of his life, work for the socialist cause became the first charge on Morris's time and energy. Only the grave illness which caused his premature death led him to slacken his efforts. During these years he produced a great bulk of prose, lectures, essays, reviews, newspaper articles, and finally, his prose romances. As he gained experience in addressing a wider and often uneducated audience, he sought for a prose style that would be at once simple and convincing, "swift and telling but not bald, eloquent to move hearts but not

[1] J. W. Mackail, *Life of William Morris*, London, 1922, II, p. 1.

[2] Letter to G. Burne-Jones, Mackail, op. cit., III, p. 116.

[3] E. P. Thompson, William Morris, *Romantic to Revolutionary*, London, 1955, p. 306.

[4] Letter to Swinburne, quoted May Morris, *William Morris. Writer, Artist, Socialist*, London, 1936, II, p. 642.

[5] *How I Became a Socialist*, first published *Justice*, 1894. See William Morris, *Collected Works*, London, 1910-1915, Vol. XXIII.

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flowery or journalistic."[6] He never talked down to his listeners, and "could not offer to the workers what he did not himself think good."[7] Morris's prose is simple, straightforward, trenchant, but never bare or dull.

Although May Morris suggests that in later life Morris felt the writing of poetry to be inappropriate[8], nevertheless he did not altogether cease composition. Much of his shorter lyric poetry that has been published comes from this period. In 1885 and 1886, he endeavoured to express some of his socialist experience in a longer poem, *The Pilgrims of Hope*.

In spite of its comparatively small bulk, and although overshadowed by the amount of prose work of the period, Morris's later poetry can by no means be neglected, for in it he expressed with the same deep conviction what he was elsewhere saying in prose.

In language, imagery and style Morris's socialist songs are close to the main body of his poetry. He did not under-rate his working-class audience. A. A. Elistratova has pointed out the basic character of the change that came over Morris's poetry in the eighties:

> "Throughout all the work of Morris runs that vision of an earthly paradise, of a golden age of free and happy mankind, but from the eighties onwards this is filled not with a fantastic content, but acquires a historic living content which the poet draws from the struggle of the working masses for socialism. Even poetry itself now means for Morris not the familiar day-dreaming, but a powerful means of influencing life, a means of bringing the future closer to the present. In the creative method of Morris, then, there prevail features of revolutionary romanticism."[9]

Mrs. Elistratova goes on to show that the fundamental difference between Morris and the earlier revolutionary romantics such as Byron and Shelley is that Morris shows greater profundity of penetration into the laws of social development. The hero of the *Chants for Socialists* is the working-class itself. Whereas the earlier revolutionary romantics addressed in their own person the working masses, in Morris' poems the workers themselves speak and express their will.

It can thus be seen that the songs Morris wrote for the socialist movement represent both something traditional and something new in English literature. They are actually the first lyrics written directly for the socialist movement by a poet of the first rank, himself engaged in the day-to-day struggle of the movement. Though partaking of the heritage of Blake, Shelley and Byron, they are also a flowering from the stem of Chartist poetry.

Socialist Lyrics

Morris's socialist lyrics, republished in the *Collected Works*, were written directly for the socialist movement and most were first published either in *Justice* or in *Commonweal*, some as pamphlets or broadsheets, and are well-known at least to the older generation of socialists in Britain. They are distinguished by the uncompromisingly revolutionary nature of their thought, by the sincerity of their emotion, and by the vividness of their imagery —"cosmic images of elemental nature", as A. A. Elistratova calls them.[10]

The first of these songs, "The Day is Coming", was published in 1884 as a leaflet, No. 1 of *Chants for Socialists*, part of the propaganda of the Democratic Federation. It consists of a series of couplets in a "popular", street-ballad-like version of the "*Sigurd*" metre:

> "Come hither, lads, and hearken, for a tale there is to tell,
> Of the wonderful days a-coming, when all shall be better than well."

The couplets have a somewhat gnomic character, showing the influence of the Eddic Songs which Morris translated from Icelandic. After pointing out that the wealth of the future will be in common, the poet asks what wealth will remain to humanity, and the answer is, the beauty of nature, the happiness of work, and the rich heritage of the past. The change can be carried out by the will of the people, and it is for the socialists to show the people how to do so. The song ends with a summons:

> "Come, join in the only battle wherein no man can fail,
> Where whoso fadeth and dieth, yet his deed shall still prevail."
>
> (*Works*, IX, pp. 180-1)

The *Second Chant for Socialists*, "The Voice of Toil", was first published in *Justice* in April, 1884. This song contrasts the misery and apathy of the oppressed workers, in the first part, with their militant collective spirit in the second part. Its melodious stanza reminds us that these lyrics were usually either written for music or set to music and formed the repertoire of various socialist choirs. The purport of the 'Chant' is simple and effective: it expresses first the helplessness of the leaderless workers, their grim fate in the capitalist-dominated

[6] May Morris, op. cit., I, p. 497.

[7] Quoted from *Commonweal*, 1885, by R. Page Arnot, *Bernard Shaw and William Morris*, Transactions of the William Morris Society, London 1957, p. 13.

[8] May Morris, op. cit., I, p. 496, and footnote.

[9] *Istoriya angliiskoy literaturi*, Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow, 1956, III, p. 310.

[10] ibid., p. 311.

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machine age, "Where fast and faster our iron master, the thing we made, for ever drives", and then the optimism of the militant socialists, "While we the living our lives are giving To bring the bright new world to birth." (IX, pp. 177-8.) "All For the Cause" (first published in *Justice*, April 1884), is a poignant lyric spoken by those who fight for a better future, and shows well the way in which those thoughts and images which had been fundamental in Morris's poetry now became transmuted for the service of his socialism:

> "Oft when men and maids are merry, ere the sunlight leaves the earth
> And they bless the day beloved, all too short for all their mirth,
> Some shall pause awhile and ponder on the bitter days of old
> Ere the toil of strife and battle overthrew the curse of gold. . . .
>
> (IX, p. 186)

To the early days of Morris's socialism belongs also the lyric "No Master", first published in *Justice* in June, 1884. It is in the same metre as "Wake, London Lads", the first political song written by Morris, and equally militant, stressing the growth of the movement. In verse one we are told how

> "The grief of slaves long passed away
> For us hath forged the chain,
> Till now each worker's patient day
> Builds up the House of Pain."

The second verse shows the first struggles of the movement, "We few against the world", and the last verse illustrates the strength of the massive host of workers—"A lightning flame, a shearing sword, A storm to overthrow." (XXIV, p. 409.)

From the year 1885 we have "The March of the Workers", a stirring song written to the tune of "John Brown's Body", which appeared in the first number of *Commonweal* in March—the journal which Morris edited for the Socialist League after the split with the opportunist SDF, and in which *A Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere* were published.[11]

"Death Song"

Other socialist songs which deserve mention are the famous "Death Song" of 1887 and "The Day of Days" (1889). The "Death Song" was a piece of direct political action by Morris, when on November 20th, 1887, in the course of popular agitation for the right of free speech in Trafalgar Square, mounted police brutally attacked the crowd, and one of the spectators, Alfred Linnell, was killed. The London socialist movement gave Linnell a mass funeral, attended by 60,000 people. One of the most moving orations over the grave was that of Morris.[12] A broadsheet was published containing an account of Linnell's death, and sold at a penny to raise funds for Linnell's orphans. This sheet was decorated with a fine drawing by the socialist artist, Walter Crane, and gave Morris's "Death Song" with a setting of music. According to Thompson, the crowd sang the song at the conclusion of the ceremony, as "the light was growing very dim". This lament is one of the most topical and vivid of all political songs in English literature, and is one of Morris's finest poems, with its message of proletarian solidarity:

> "Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,
> But one and all if they would dusk the day."
>
> (IX, p. 124)

Not only was this song part of the socialist propaganda of its own day: it also has a message for Britain today. Though the words of the song have been treasured in the socialist movement, the original pamphlet with the music had been lost and forgotten. Some copies were discovered in a second-hand bookshop several years ago, and the song was sung by the London Youth Choir at a Trafalgar Square demonstration against imperialism in June, 1954.[13]

The poem "Drawing Near the Light", was published in *Commonweal* in April, 1888, and shows a further characteristic use of imagery that had always been significant for Morris—the "tangled wood", which had once meant the tangle of emotions and dreams, but which now, with the development of Morris's political and social thought, comes to signify the tangled world of capitalism. The poem, originally published without a title, is very much a personal plea for tolerance of artistic occupations even in the midst of the struggle.

One of the latest and most intimate of Morris's socialist songs is the "Day of Days", first published in the periodical *Time* in 1890. It is not so much a militant call to arms as an expression of Morris's own weariness in the long struggle:

> "Each eve earth falleth down the dark,
> As though its hope were o'er;
> Yet lurks the sun when day is done
> Behind to-morrow's door."
>
> (IX, p. 115)

Morris's "cosmic imagery" has full play in this song. The night is likened to the apparently desolate state of the socialist movement: "We've toiled and failed;

[11] A further three socialist lyrics published in this volume, "Down Among the Dead Men", "May Day", and "May Day 1894", are less striking both in thought and expression.

[12] Quoted by Thompson, op. cit., p. 580, from *Commonweal*, Dec. 24, 1887.

[13] Article in the *Daily Worker*, June 29, 1954, "A Death Song Comes to Life".

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we spake the word; None hearkened; dumb we lie." But night is followed inevitably by day: "Grey grows the dawn while men-folk sleep, Unseen spreads on the light," and the last verse expresses Morris's belief that their cause will triumph. We may offer the criticism that the bringing about of socialism demands more of us than simply wakening up to a new day. No one was more aware of this than Morris or toiled more faithfully than he, and while we may consider the poem mainly as an expression of his weariness of intrigue, pettiness and apparent failure, it also testifies to his unswerving faith in the power of the workers. In a delicate, plangent setting this song, too, found its place in the Socialist Song Books of the day.

Vision of Socialism

William Morris's socialist lyrics directly influenced the labour movement of his day, appealing to the militant, class-conscious and most enlightened elements. Among those who were most strongly influenced by Morris, not only through his speeches, lectures and articles, but also through his poetry, was Tom Mann, outstanding agitator of the nineties, leading militant trade unionist, and founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Mann's "intense realisation of what is and what might be was the mainspring of his unfailing power as a propagandist of socialism. Among the various men and women who spread the new ideas in the eighties, he was the one closest to William Morris in the passionate range of his demands upon a new world.[14] Mann was especially influenced by the link forged by Morris between culture and society. In Mann's notebooks quotations from Morris are mingled with the details of his trade union campaigns. His favourite lines from "The Day is Coming" describe how man will enter into his cultural heritage:[15]

> "And the homes of ancient stories, the tombs of the mighty dead;
> And the wise men seeking out marvels, and the poet's teeming dead . . ."
> For all these shall be ours and all men's, nor shall any lack a share
> Of the toil and the gain of living in the days when the world grows fair."

Morris in his socialist lyrics not only roused and encouraged his fellow-workers; he also gave them a vision of what socialism might be. "It is to stir you up not to be content with a little that I am here tonight," said Morris in 1885.[16] His high conception of the quality of life under socialism is expressed many times in these songs.

Pilgrims of Hope

The only longer original poem composed by Morris in these later years was *The Pilgrims of Hope*, written for the *Commonweal* and published there from April, 1885 to July, 1886. Morris himself republished only three sections of it, "The Message of the March Wind", "Mother and Son", and "The Half of Life Gone", in *Poems by the Way*. From the outset, the structure of the poem had been rather vague. "I am pounding away at a continuation of my March poem: I want to make a sort of lyrical romance of it: next time I shall try my hand at a versified Socialist meeting. But what shall I do with my couple in the long run?"[17] In 1886, after the last instalment was published, he was contemplating "getting my Pilgrims of Hope in order, so as to make a book of it: I shall add and alter a good deal though . . .".[18] Morris never found the leisure for this, and though his friend Buxton Forman received his permission to reprint the poem for private circulation, he knew that Morris was not satisfied with it.[19] May Morris has eloquently described the circumstances in which it was composed: "Piece by piece it was written, after he had returned home—he wrote late usually—from poor quarters full of sights and stories which had wrung his heart by their sordidness and dull endurance: it was written in sorrow and anger, in revolt at the things he saw and the things he divined, and the slight, effective sketches of the narative bring home to many of us who have lived on into the time of tragedy and violence of the Twentieth Century, the meetings and street-corner gatherings of those days of scarcely articulate unrest and discomfort."[20]

The first section, "The Message of the March Wind", is written in a song stanza of alternating dactyllic and anapaestic four-stress lines. It describes two country lovers who might well be Giles and Joan from *Love Is Enough*, as they wander through the spring landscape. But these latter-day lovers are less certain of their world than were Giles and Joan. The wind blows from London, "And telleth of gold and of hope and unrest; Of power that helps; of wisdom that knoweth, But teacheth not aught of the worst and the best."

Why did Morris choose this particular metre for the opening of his poem of modern life? It may have been with a reminiscence of Meredith, for the lush, smooth countryside of this first section, as well as its lingering, evocative rhythm has some of the atmosphere of *Love In The Valley*. Yet it has not the

[14] See Dona Torr, *Tom Mann and His Times*, I (1856-1890), London, 1956, p. 53.
[15] ibid., p. 192.
[16] ibid., p. 53.
[17] To May Morris, March 1885. *Letters of William Morris*, ed. Philip Henderson, London, 1950, p. 235.
[18] To Jenny Morris, Oct. 29, 1886.
[19] See Morris, *Works*, XXIV, Intro., p. xxxii.
[20] ibid.

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same pictorial effectiveness of the comparable passages in his own *Love Is Enough*, which were written in Morris's favourite four-beat "minstrel-measure". Morris has difficulty in places, too, in making this loosely-boned stanza take a load of significant meaning. On the other hand, when the speaker's emotion is heightened, his denunciation becomes impassioned and the stanza attains a certain rhetorical splendour:

> "The singers have sung and the builders have builded,
> The painters have fashioned their tales of delight;
> For what and for whom hath the world's book been gilded,
> When all is for these but the blackness of night?"
> (p. 370.)

Such stanzas relate the poem closely to the *Chants for Socialists* and we can well imagine them taking root in the memory of agitators such as Tom Mann.

The concluding verses of this section are among the best-known stanzas of Morris's poetry:

> "Come back to the inn, love, and the light and the fire,
> And the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet . . ."

Their quality lies in the rather delicate atmosphere of nostalgia and in the catch and break in the first line, like a dancer's changing of feet, the kind of cross-rhythm that modern poetry-lovers have come to appreciate.

Section Two, "The Bridge and the Street", has a memorable passage on London Bridge and the Thames:

> "On each side lay the City, and Thames ran between it
> Dark, struggling, unheard 'neath the wheels and the feet." (p. 371.)

This glimpse of the hurrying crowds of London and the sinister Thames (a very different river from the Thames of *The Earthly Paradise* or of *News from Nowhere*) is not unparalleled in the literature of the time, notably in the profoundly tragic picture painted by James Thomson in *The City of Dreadful Night* (1880). The river as a symbol of capitalist corruption had been used by Blake—"the chartered Thames"—while Dickens, whose novels of London were Morris's constant recreation, had made play with the bridge motif in *Little Dorrit* (1857-8) and with the corruption of the river in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864). The striking feature of Morris's treatment is the ideological content:

> "Was all nought but confusion? What man and what master
> Had each of these people that hastened along? . . .
> What sign 'mid all these to tell foeman from brother?
> What sign of the hope in our hearts that had grown?" (pp. 371-2.)

Waking in the morning, the hero, Richard, gazes out in dismay at the "dull houses" that "stared on the prey they had trapped", and asks himself why they have come to "this grim net of London, this prison built stark with the greed of the ages?"

Sending to War

The Third Section, "Sending to the War", is in a different metre, to emphasise the change of theme to the warmongering of one of the imperialistic campaigns of the late 'sixties or early 'seventies. (In order to let his poem culminate with the Paris Commune, Morris sets the radical and socialist meetings described more than a decade earlier than they actually took place. This of course does detract from the complete topicality of the poem and illustrates the difficulty Morris had in finding a satisfactory plot structure.) Appropriately, the metre is the "popular" version of the "*Sigurd*" metre, which has the flavour of a broadsheet ballad. In a few lines Morris sums up the contrasts of class society and the war situation:

> "And still from naught to nothing the bright-skinned horses drew
> Dull men and sleek-faced women with never a deed to do;
> While all about and around them the street-flood ebbed and flowed,
> Worn feet, grey anxious faces, grey backs bowed 'neath the load;
> Lo! The sons of an ancient people! And for this they fought and fell
> In the days by fame made glorious, in the tale that singers tell."
> (p. 374.)

The cadences and vocabulary of *Sigurd the Volsung* have been pressed into the service of ironical comment.

Depressed and saddened by the crowd's acceptance of the assertion that "a cry from the heart of the nation against the foe is hurled", the hero is nevertheless profoundly affected by the approaching military procession. By himself experiencing the effect of a chauvinistic display of arms on the crowd, by himself becoming emotionally affected, Morris's hero excuses the people for being deceived, and becomes one with them sharing even their illusions. He is no bourgeois intellectual, cut off from the daily life of the people. But instead of acclaiming the Victorian military procession, he has a vision of the future, when "the poor and the wall of faces wan", the cowed and acceptant spectators, will themselves be marching in the ranks of the people's army:

> "For woe had grown into will, and wrath was bared of its sheath,
> And stark in the streets of London stood the crop of the dragon's teeth."

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The next section, "Mother and Son", in the form of a monologue of the heroine addressed to her infant, tells us in retrospect something of the earlier lives of the protagonists. Still in the 'Sigurd' metre, greater use of alliteration and a flowing rather than a rattling rhythm stress the lyrical character of the episode. Although the structure of *The Pilgrims of Hope* was never worked out to completion, this section, when the mother speaks to her son as the mother of Sigurd had spoken to the infant hero, is evidently related to the conclusion of the poem, when the father is left alone with the son after the mother's death, with the purpose of educating him as a future fighter in the Cause. The connecting links between the sections are, however, missing, and Section Five, "New Birth", takes up the story again from the hero's point of view, telling us more of his early life and first acquaintance with socialism.

New Birth

The early part of this section suffers from some lack of clearness as to the background of the hero and heroine. Morris was evidently wanting to bring his characters into immediate contact with the proletarian movement of the city. We may ask why he took as his hero a character with a country background and an incompletely motivated one at that. Why did he not take an ordinary London workman? One reason is probably the desire for contrast: the peacefulness of the countryside and the restlessness and gloomy despair of the town. This is perhaps an unconscious repetition of his own experience, for Morris's acceptance of socialism and of active participation in the socialist struggle entailed a very considerable break even with the surroundings of his previous life. Certainly the most memorable moment of the poem is that in Section Five when the hero is converted from his vague revolutionary radicalism to socialism.

It was of course by no means untypical of the early socialist movement for the most enthusiastic supporters to be newcomers to the great city, since the contradictions of wealth and poverty, privilege and deprivation struck them with full force. Tom Mann, for example, was a Warwickshire lad from a country village, though he worked in a colliery from the age of 10. Dona Torr has pointed out that the revolutionary traditions of the Civil War still lived among some of the agricultural labouring families. Typical figures of the socialist movement of the eighties and nineties were dedicated working men like Mahon and Maguire, neither of them Londoners, who living at starvation level had no regular employment as workmen and devoted all their energies to agitation and organisation. At this period, before mass working-class activity based on the new unions was organised, all socialist propaganda tended to be rather freelance, without an immediate industrial background, and this is fully reflected in Morris's hero.

We may note too that Morris's playlet, *The Tables Turned, or Nupkins Awakened* (1887), written for and repeatedly performed by members of the socialist movement, has as its heroine the countrywoman Mary Pinch, who tells the court of the economic destruction of country life—"So up to London we came . . . and when all's said and done, we had better have lain down and died in the grey cottage clean and empty . . .".[21] Nupkins concludes with a country scene after the Revolution when the unrighteous judge is himself judged by the liberated workers. Morris always insisted that the urbanised workers must reclaim their heritage of the countryside, as one of the main cultural aims of a communist society.

Like many of the working men with whom Morris associated in the SDF, the hero of his poem is a craftsman, a joiner who at first finds no difficulty in plying his trade in London. He seeks in vain some way of furthering his hopes for society. He is critical of "the horror of London", the rich men playing at politics, the wealthy philantropists and social workers. A workmate who knows his bitterness invites him to a meeting:

> . . . "Come over tomorrow to our Radical spouting-place;
> For there, if we hear nothing new, at least we shall see a new face;
> He is one of those Communist chaps, and 'tis like that you two may agree."

There follows an account of the meeting, evoking the authentic atmosphere of hundreds of similar gatherings:

> "Dull and dirty the room. Just over the chairman's chair
> Was a bust, a Quaker's face with nose cocked up in the air . . .
> Some thirty men we were of the type that I knew full well,
> Listless, rubbed down to the type of our easy-going hell.
> My heart sank down as I entered, and wearily there I sat
> While the chairman strove to end his maunder of this and of that."
>
> (pp. 382-3.)

There follows Morris's lively portrait of himself as the speaker of whom the radical chairman seems half ashamed. The listener is completely won over, and expects the other members of the audience to accept this new doctrine eagerly; but the meeting dissolves in the usual blend of apathy and acrimony, while the speaker, as frequently happened with

[21] May Morris, op. cit., II, pp. 534-5.

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Morris himself, grew so "hot and eager" that he could not answer the "sneers and the silence". But Richard no longer feels outcast in the midst of the "city squalor and the country stupor". Like many other workers of his time, he had been prepared for some time to accept socialism; but his first hearing of a rational Marxist exposition came like a sudden revelation:

> "I was born once long ago: I am born again tonight."
> (p. 384.)

The New Proletarian

Section Six, "The New Proletarian", tells of Richard's first work in the socialist movement. A testing time comes for his faith. The small legacy from his father is now lost, and he is dependent only on his craft earnings. He loses his job and is arrested for street-corner speaking. This change in his hero's status is important because it illustrates that in Morris's love of work for work's sake there was no bourgeois cant. He fully realised that the proletarian's attitude to his work could not easily be that of the craftsman:

> "I take up fear with my chisel, fear lies 'twixt me and my plane,
> And I wake in the merry morning to a new unwonted pain.
> That's fear: I shall live it down—and many a thing besides
> Till I win the poor dulled heart which the workman's jacket hides."
> (p. 385.)

Morris was full of understanding for the workman condemned to a life of dull, repetitive labour: "If I were to work ten hours a day at work I despised and hated, I should spend my leisure, I hope in political agitation, but I fear in drinking."[22]

Nineteenth-century English bourgeois writers who chose a working-class hero tended to give him a favoured position. To some extent this nullified commitment to the workers and prevented complete identification with the proletariat (e.g. *Felix Holt*). Middle-class writers were convinced that the factory worker could have no leisure, energy or money to spare for politics or culture, as the novels of George Gissing abundantly illustrate. The reality of course was different. Tom Mann in the seventies after working from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. went four nights a week to classes, on other evenings to the theatre, Public Library or meetings.[23] Morris, however, evidently felt he must account for his hero's political interests by some special background, while the turn of events shows Richard's complete commitment.

Section VII, "In Prison—and At Home" again gives us the view-point of the heroine, expressing very beautifully the sorrow and pain of the early socialists who knew they would never see "socialism in their time". Section VIII, "The Half of Life Gone", is an interlude of reflection, spoken by Richard, in the years after the events which form the climax of the work. He is resting in the country by the side of a hay-field, longing for his love who is dead, yet reminding himself that he still has a task to do in the world. The setting is idyllic, in a sharp contrast to the scenes that have just been described. But this well-loved landscape is now bereft of the one person who made it real for him. In his mind there mingle and conflict feelings of despair and desolation—"Like a ghost from the lives of the living and their earthly deeds I shrink"—but he immediately chides himself, and contrasts his own full life with the emptiness of those who have never known his happiness, even if it is now gone; while for him there are still waiting deeds and toil.

A New Friend

In Section IX, "A New Friend", the hero relates what has happened in the meantime. Edward Thompson has rightly suggested that "The Message of the March Wind" gives a moment of insight into the turmoil of Morris's personal feelings at the time. "It suggests to us how strong the grip of his will and his political convictions had to be over his inclinations—inclinations which rebelled at the daily struggle in the heart of industrial capitalism, and which beckoned him back to Kelmscott and the repose of his art."[24]

A passage in the present section reveals a further aspect of Morris's sincerity, his feeling that it was easy for him to be a socialist compared to what proletarian members of the movement had to overcome before they could act politically:

> "When the poor man thinks—and rebels, the whip lies ready anear;
> But he who is rebel and rich may live safe for many a year,
> While he warms his heart with pictures of all the glory to come . . ."
> (p. 395.)

Morris, unlike the Fabians, never indulged in feelings of superiority to the workers. Nor did it occur to him to use his financial situation to secure any position of power in the movement, and in fact he continued to subsidise the Socialist League and the *Commonweal* for some time after he was convinced they were on the way to anarchism, so averse was he to using his financial advantage as a lever.[25] Along with this attitude went his willing acceptance

[22] Quoted Mackail, op. cit., II, p. 69.
[23] Dona Torr, op. cit., p. 40.
[24] Thompson, op. cit., pp. 776-7.
[25] ibid, esp. pp. 610-612.

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of any task, however minor or trying, that might be entrusted to him by his comrades.

Paris Commune

Section IX goes on to describe the meeting with a new friend, a middle-class intellectual who helps the hero to find congenial employment, and who becomes the close friend of Richard and his wife. But he too is now dead. The period of the tale is now indicated more precisely, with mention of the Great Revolution in France, i.e. The Paris Commune. Morris's selection of this event as the central point of his story is justified because it makes it clear that the communism spoken of is revolutionary communism. The Commune appeared to Morris to be the only event of contemporary experience which could uncompromisingly demonstrate that he was no evolutionist, and Jack Lindsay has pointed out that "The Commune was never far from Morris's thought; it was for him the sustaining proof of the revolutionary purpose carried deep in the hearts and lives of the masses."[26]

Section X, "Ready to Depart", tells of the hopes for the success of the Commune. Richard suddenly realises the love that has arisen between his friend and his wife. In accordance with Morris's declared beliefs on love and marriage, expressed clearly in *News from Nowhere* and other writings, in spite of the pain caused by this revelation, the hero has no feelings of "property" in his wife. The three remain friends and comrades, and in spite of his sorrow, even now he longs for those days to return.

Section XI, "A Glimpse of the Coming Day", describes their participation in the Commune, their joy when

> ". . . from a grey stone building we saw a great flag fly,
> One colour, red and solemn, 'gainst the blue of the spring-tide sky."
>
> (p. 402.)

Richard is now convinced that the victory of communism is assured, that it is "now, real, solid and at hand". His thoughts immediately go back to his own country, longing for the new joy to spread there too. But the situation of the Commune is precarious, and they must learn "the business of battle and the manner of dying at need". Section XII, "Meeting the War-Machine", describes the tragic end of the Commune, "The hope of man devoured in the day when the Gods are athirst." A magnificent passage of some forty lines apostrophises the Earth, giving a cosmic background and significance to the struggle:

> "O Earth, Earth, look on thy lovers, who knew all thy gifts and thy gain,
> But cast them aside for thy sake, and caught up barren pain . . .
> In the sordid streets of the city mid a folk that knew them not . . ."
>
> (p. 405.)

But the bourgeois war-machine moves on ruthlessly, and the Commune is doomed. The final section, "The Story's Ending", tells of the defeat, of the death of the hero's wife and his friend in the fighting, and of the hero's return to England and his young son. In spite of Richard's grief for his wife and his friend, the concluding note of the poem is one of convinced hope for the future:

> "Year after year shall men meet with the red flag overhead,
> And shall call on the help of the vanquished and the kindness of the dead.
> And time that weareth most things, and the years that overgrow
> The tale of the fools triumphant, yet clearer and clearer shall show
> The deeds of the helpers of menfolk to every age and clime,
> The deeds of the cursed and the conquered that were wise before their time."
>
> (p. 406.)

The final lines express the hero's resolution to continue in the fight, ignoring his private grief.

Attempt at Assessment

The Pilgrims of Hope was a deliberate attempt on the part of William Morris to use his poetic gift for the service of the socialist movement. There were certain objective causes which prevented the full success of this attempt.

In the first place, at the period when Morris wrote the poem it was difficult to see just how the fight for socialism was going to develop. The SDF and the Socialist League still represented only the spear-head of a fight which had comparatively little enlightened mass support. Morris, being well aware of this,[27] placed the culminating incident of his poem over a decade earlier, with a consequent loss of topicality and immediacy. The poem thus concludes on a note of waiting, waiting for the hero to recover and his son to grow up. The predominant note of the poem's ending is therefore temporary defeat, rather than hope.

It must be emphasised that this was not due to any doubt on Morris's part of the ultimate need for revolution: it was the reflection of the actual situation. A contributory factor to this tone of defeat was Morris's subjective feeling that he was too old

[26] Jack Lindsay, "The Paris Commune and English Literature", *Marxist Quarterly*, I, 3, July 1954, p. 177.

[27] cf. *Commonweal* article, March 1886, quoted Thompson, op. cit., pp. 484-5, and Chapter IV.

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to be as adequate a fighter for socialism as he would have liked.

The Pilgrims of Hope was in intention more than an attempt to express in epic form the experiences of the British socialist movement. It was also a bid to secure a wider audience for poetry, a poetry addressed to the masses. So far, Morris stands almost alone in this attempt. The main line of development in English poetry since the early decades of this century has been that of an aesthetic which turns away from the masses and addresses a cultural élite, a development exemplified by the poetry of Yeats and Eliot. This raises the question of the formal development of modern English poetry, too wide a question to deal with here, but we may call to mind that Morris, with his early vivid use of ballad form, and his later experiments in *Love Is Enough* and *Sigurd the Volsung*, stood on the threshold of this development, however little attention may be paid today to his contribution.

How are we to regard *The Pilgrims of Hope* within the body of Morris's poetic work? Is it a noble failure, or can it stand as a substantial part of his legacy? Perhaps the answer is both. If it is a failure, it is only because it is incomplete. Thompson has criticised above all the language of the poem, which relies, he asserts, "upon words, images, rhythms coined in the romantic movement".[28] However, what is more worthy of note is that Morris, using the vocabulary, images and metre of his mature poetry, succeeded in expressing so vividly a new and contemporary content. This is particularly noticeable in the passages describing the city, the city crowds and the socialist meetings.

Only in this sense of incompleteness is *The Pilgrims of Hope* a failure, and it was the recognition of this which made Morris object to its republication. "Though Morris himself did not consider this poem to be a finished work, *The Pilgrims of Hope*, because of its powerful effect on the reader must assume its place among the first of Morris's poems; a stirring hymn to the heroism of the revolutionaries was a particularly brilliant phenomenon in the field of English literature at that time, a field so greatly filled with the spirit of disbelief and despondency", is the verdict of a recent Soviet critic,[29] with which we may indeed agree. In spite of the late-romantic tradition which he took over, Morris's socialist poetry had inherent in it the qualities of realistic observation, vivid image, narrative power, organising intellect, materialist thought and concern for humanity, which makes it a worthy companion to his mature work in prose.

The brilliance and perfection of Morris's later prose works have obscured the importance of his later poetry, whose full effect will not be realised until there appears a true successor and continuer of Morris's purpose.

[28] Thompson, op. cit. p. 775 seq.

[29] Y. F. Shedov (ed.) *Selections from William Morris*, Moscow, 1959. Introduction, p. 11.

Discussion Contributions on:

The Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

Jack Dunman

I AM glad indeed that *Marxism Today* has come into the dialogue between Marxism and Christianity; or perhaps one should say Religion, because it should not be confined to Christianity. The dialogue has in fact gone very much further than might be inferred. For example, *World Marxist Review** recently quoted the following:

"Marxism is not a vulgar form of materialism. It is atheistic because atheism is an integral part of its world outlook. It believes in the need for and adequacy of material reality, while religion and idealism thrust man beyond its confines, alienate him and hamper his liberation. This atheism is, therefore, not a denial, but an expression of humanism which has its own eschatology. It is necessary that we understand that denial of the transcendental as far as Marxists are concerned is not a fault but a virtue since it enables man to rediscover himself. This world outlook cannot be countered by polemics or false praise alone. What is needed is a deep study of this world outlook so as to be able in the future

* *Social Doctrine of the Vatican and the 20th Century* by Libero Pierantozzi, Vol. 8, No. 7, July 1965.

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> to enter into a dialogue with Marxists which Paul VI in his encyclical 'Ecclesiam Suam' thinks is almost impossible."

This statement was made by a Catholic, a Spanish Catholic and a Bishop; no hedge priest, but the secretary of the Spanish Episcopy. And it was made in St. Peter's, at the Ecumenical Council. I myself had the pleasure of "dialoguing" at a Catholic Teachers' Training College with a well-known member of the Society of Jesus; and the audience, and he himself, were in no way offended when I remarked that for some of the time, I had thought I was listening to the Bishop of Woolwich.

One of the reasons for this revolutionary change is, in Spain, mutual recognition by the Catholic Church and the Communist Party that they are the only effective opponents of the Franco regime. In Africa, as was pointed out in an article in *New Times* (No. 35, 1965) "The Catholic Church in the 'Third World' " by Julius Stroynowski), the Church is compelled to come closer to the people precisely because it is losing ground to Islam. Hence the Mass in the vernacular: not mainly for the benefit of Catholics in Britain.

Aim in Life

I think also that we Marxists must recognise in the modern world a certain disintegration of moral values (indeed, it reflects the disintegration of capitalism) and an unwillingness to recognise, much less seek out, an aim in life; a hostility to any form of commitment. This is not shared by religious people from Catholic to extreme evangelical, so that immediately Marxists find they have some common ground with them.

Further, it is clear that the efforts of Churchmen, whether the Bishop of Woolwich or some Catholics, to bring their church closer to the modern world, involves an exaltation of the importance of relations with other people at the expense of hitherto existing concepts of God. Their efforts to relate this attitude to older forms of religion and its various concepts (e.g. prayer) may not interest Marxists very deeply, and may at times even seem a little absurd. But they are not in fact addressed to us, and I do not know really why we should object to them. We must recognise that to religious people they have a deep significance.

This leads me to agree with much that is said by Edward Charles. I think that John Lewis opened up the question well, but the implication that the fundamental beliefs of Christians and others do not matter and need not be discussed, seems to me bound to inhibit the progressive development of understanding. Our philosophy is important to us; we can restrain our desire to proselytise, but we are surely correct to want our colleagues in dialogue at least to understand what it is. Christians must be allowed to feel the same.

Likewise, I doubt if it is really helpful to stress so heavily the passages in the Marxist classics which postulate the total disappearance of religion as soon as we have a satisfactory economic system. We seem to be saying to Christians: "We don't think your illusions are worth discussing because we know (do Marxists *know*?) that they will all fade away when we have peace and three square meals a day." Christians do not keep telling us that materialism does not matter because the Kingdom of God will clear it all up in good time, and we should be irritated if they did.

This brings us to the really fundamental question: are we going beyond agreeing to stop talking about the disappearance of religion, and to begin to recognise that the present mighty intellectual travail that is taking place in the Church may result in some positive contribution to our understanding of the world we live in? Certainly the dialogue will be happier if we are able to do so, and I am going to risk my own immortal Marxist soul by saying I think we should recognise it may.

Personal Relationship

Let me put it in this way. When we discuss with Christians, one of the chief stumbling blocks is the question: "In the absence of Religion, what is there to make men behave decently towards each other?" Our answer is that the recognition of the need to work together is the basic sanction: modern economic organisation means that only by working for other people, and they for you, can you benefit yourself. This involves unhappy echoes of Adam Smith, though the New Testament text "Ye are all members one of another" does something to make it sound a bit better. But in many debates and dialogues, I have had a slight feeling of inadequacy about it. When we think of the heroes of our own movement, from Bram Fischer backwards, and the vast amount of self-sacrifice our movement has produced, "enlightened self-interest" hardly seems enough. We admire these people precisely because self-interest has been driven away to the opposite pole of their existence. I think we Marxists could well allow admiration and emulation of this human capability *for its own sake* to be a factor in our appreciation of the Universe we inhabit.

Whether this is very different from what the Bishop of Woolwich and others are saying, I do not know. It requires more study by all of us; it is expressed by one of the writers whom the Bishop quotes with approval that "the experience of personal relationship . . . is an encounter with the Transcendent". He certainly says a lot more

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designed to make the point acceptable to members of his Church; and to enable them to retain forms, ideas, and ceremonies that have become important to them. With this attitude of his, we should entirely sympathise. It simply proves he is in earnest about winning acceptance for the revolutionary ideas he has evolved (and do not forget, Catholic thinkers are doing the same).

I believe that if we recognise the possibility of Marxism moving perhaps only a little, while Christianity moves perhaps a lot, dialogue, understanding, and co-operation will be very greatly advanced. So will Socialism, Marxism, and human decency.

Laws of Dialectics

M. Prior

I HAVE read with interest Comrade Cornforth's article and the ensuing discussion, though being no trained philosopher I have at times had to struggle to hold on to the arguments. Despite this I feel impelled to write on the contribution made by Comrade Spence, which seems to me to show the shallowness and unreality of the worst kind of Marxism.

The dialectical method of Marxism provides a means of understanding and analysing society. Thus because society encompasses all the works of man, Marxism is relevant to all those works; something clearly shown by the many perceptive books upon history, economics, art and science written by Marxists using dialectical methods.

But this very strength of Marxism carries its own dangers, particularly in analysing the complexes of man's knowledge as it exists today; for the universal character of the analytical tools does not imply that in some way knowledge of these tools makes the complete man, able to descend upon any branch of human activity and immediately understand and characterise it. It is this mistaken arrogance which Comrade Spence displays, and which has discredited Marxism in the eyes of many people. The method adopted in his article is to quote a statement, or a version of the statement, to be discredited. A quotation from Marx or Lenin, or a short encapsulated Marxist epigram, is then produced which in some way appears to contradict this statement, and we finish with a short discourse which boils down to saying "You disagree with Marx (Lenin) therefore you are obviously wrong".

The absurdities that this process leads to are well illustrated in Comrade Spence's contribution. For example, the following sequence:

(1) Cornforth says that "techniques of proof in logic and mathematics are . . . very highly specialised, and are still the subject of dispute amongst those specially concerned with them."

(2) Lenin says "Logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge are the same thing".

(3) Communist Party members are specially "concerned" with dialectics, which is the same as logic, therefore Cornforth means that the Communist Party is rocked by dispute. Therefore Cornforth is wrong.

Now the point made by Cornforth would be agreed to by any professional mathematician. The nature of mathematical proof *is* being hotly disputed and it *is* couched in highly specialised terms. Such advances as Gödel's theorem and the development of communication theory have dropped a bomb in the traditional mathematical ideas of proof and provability. Yet this is dismissed by Comrade Spence, for, he implies, in some way the Communist Party is the final arbiter, and after all it has not been affected by Gödel's theorem to any noticeable degree. Yet how much mathematics does Comrade Spence know? What precisely are his qualifications?

I cannot see any evidence for saying that Marxist mathematicians are better at mathematics than non-Marxist mathematicians. However, a Marxist non-mathematician knows less than either of them about mathematical proof and he should realise it. The pattern is discernible in the rest of the argument. I would not feel proficient to argue most of the philosophical points, though in my ignorance I might comment that to produce a negation of the negation out of eating a bun at tea may be clever, but it does reduce the whole thing to the level of the three card trick and other wonders that deceive the eye. However, on straying outside pure philosophy Comrade Spence displays an appalling ignorance. It may be appealing to characterise Ohm's law by "a reflection of the struggle between pressure and resistance" but it remains on the level of school physics and bears little relation to actual physical processes. It would be very pleasing if indeed "a law cannot be violated but only an attempt to violate made" but it is just not true.

I am working upon solids which have no resistance whatever the current, while work is being pursued

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upon solids which have oscillating current increments upon voltage increase. Indeed one theory postulates that the very functioning of the nervous system depends upon a violation of Ohm's law.

Now if Comrade Spence wishes to say this is not then a law because it is violated he may do so. He is just as free to say that I do not violate the law of murder if I kill someone. But he should understand that this will verbally cut him off from the shop-floor as well as the physicists.

I have written solely about this one contribution and have avoided the main heart of the discussion, because of two great dangers inherent in Comrade Spence's approach. The first is to be dismissed as intellectual cranks by men who could be won if our arguments were presented rationally. The second leads straight to Lysenko and the scientific debasement attendant upon scientific conjecture he adopted as a Party line.

There is no easy path to understanding the laws of nature and society. Marx and Lenin contain valuable clues and deep understanding, but they are only the first steps. To claim anything more is to go against the warnings of Marx himself.

John Drinkwater

THE subjective, the objective and consciousness need to be rescued from the confusion in which Gordon Gray (*Marxism Today*, April) leaves them.

His final paragraph reads: "By virtue of its marriage to the objective world, to materialism, the dialectic recognises the indispensable importance (!) of the subjective aspect of life." He marries the dialectic to the world or to materialism (take your choice, they are not the same thing) and brings forth the subjective. Now had we supposed logic was subjective, he continues, we would be wrong; logic is objective "inasmuch as it can be replicated in machinery such as computers." Nothing in fact is subjective, according to Gray, except: "Only consciousness itself, the essential awareness, is wholely at the pole of subjectivity." That is, consciousness does not originate in the objective world, but is wholly subjective.

On the contrary, consciousness, and its human form self-consciousness, originates and develops as a part of human society. It is compounded out of the complex of human relations which is society. Succeeding generations inherit a level of self-consciousness, develop it, and bequeath it to the next generation. A baby becomes a human being because he has the capacity to relive, in his consciousness, the life of the society into which he is born. Self-consciousness exists and grows subjectively in the minds of the individual members of the society; the objective life of society is re-lived in their minds. At particular moments, for example when you first wake, you can be aware that this is happening, that an event from the previous day's life of the society in which you live is being re-lived involuntarily, in your mind's eye. The individual lives dual lives; the one subjectively in his consciousness, the other objectively by his actions in society.

Self-consciousness is a living, therefore a developing process. Subjectively it develops in the individual to the extent that he assimilates the complex of human relations, including his own, in the society in which he lives; objectively, it develops, achieving permanent inheritable existence, to the extent that the individual, by his actions, returns to society what he has assimilated from it.

Self-consciousness is not merely a mirror to society; an individual who learns that 1+1 makes 2 does more than assimilate and return this proposition to society. Self-consciousness is not a literary idea; it is a real function of human life whose mode is necessarily to build, to compare, to destroy, to grow; so what is assimilated from society by its individual members is returned only after its transformation in the consciousness of the individual. A painter exhibiting his painting is returning his subjective life to the society from which the raw materials of his subjective life originated. Society did not give him the painting; society gave him the raw materials including the necessary self-conscious understanding, for the picture to grow in the painter. All life takes this form between the individual and the society, which also includes that individual. Much mystery arises because the society which an individual faces, includes himself.

The self of self-consciousness is thus the product of society, of living in society; the self which I am conscious of is the life of society as it has transferred to my consciousness. The fact that the mode of existence of society is through physically separate individuals gives each individual a unique self-consciousness; no two individuals live and grow in the same society; and, therefore, no two individuals create for themselves the same subjective life. Each man is a society unto himself. But it is a society which

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can only continue to exist in living contact with objective society.

A dialectical mode of thinking is closer to the real contradictory nature of consciousness, with its objective content and subjective form, and it is this closer approach to reality which establishes its pre-eminence. The objective and the subjective exist in reality as inter-penetrating categories and a mode of thinking which recognises this is better able to cope with the world than one which does not.

M. C. R. Butler

CORNFORTH'S article and the subsequent discussion on the laws of dialectics has, in part, been concerned with the laws of logic and mathematics, and I wish to comment on this in two ways; firstly, on what seems to be an inadequate distinction between mathematics itself and its applications, and secondly, on Gordon Gray's confusing remarks about both Gödel's Theorem and the special theory of relativity.

Mathematics and logic have now acquired a formal structure which is clearly different from that of the sciences concerned with the material world, in the everyday sense. In mathematics and logic, the objects of study are abstract, or formal, systems consisting of a set of strictly prescribed data, which includes the allowable rules of deduction; and the objective is to deduce consequences of the data, to establish decision procedures and rules of computation within such systems, and to study connections and relations between different systems. These systems are wholly abstract, and any reader may, if he wishes, invent his own and go to work on it (the difficulty is to be both original and non-trivial). Of course most of the large number of systems under study today derive more or less directly from arithmetic and geometry, physics and astronomy, but the connections now are often extremely tenuous, and both logic and mathematics have internal lives of their own which are quite separate from their applications. As Marxists would hope and expect, the centres of interest tend to be those systems adjudged to be richest in connections and applications and most replete with tough unsolved problems.

Within this context, Emile Burns' requirement that the laws of logic and mathematics should produce results in conformity with objective reality raises, I think, a serious difficulty. His implication seems to be that objective reality provides criteria of validity outside the formal systems under study. This I find very difficult to accept, for the content of the theorems of logic and mathematics have no meaning outside the formal systems in which they are stated. In fact, the only link with the objective reality which (I think) Burns has in mind occurs at a different level, through our use of everyday logic as the ultimate arbiter between correct and incorrect proofs. It is the proofs, not the content of theorems, which must stand the test of ordinary logical validity (despite the failure, in 1965, of two reputed proofs of a famous conjecture of Poincaré's, the experts still believe its content to be true).

Emile Burns' criterion seems to be more relevant to the applications of mathematics to the study of, say, physics or economics. For such an application to be possible, the domain of application must have its own laws, and these laws must be amenable to translation into the language of an appropriate formal mathematical system. Once this translation has been effected, purely mathematical deduction can be made within the formal system, and the results may be translated back into predictions about the domain of application. If the predictions contradict objective reality, and "technical" mistakes are excluded, then one must conclude either that the supposed laws are invalid or that the translation process is invalid. One cannot conclude logically that the formal system is itself wrong.

In my opinion, logic and mathematics are best regarded as the sciences concerned with abstract systems. Their laws thus tell us more than how to argue and calculate (as Cornforth suggests); they tell us also something about the properties of abstract systems. Many such systems have useful applications, those used by physicists being particularly profound and penetrating, but probably the major part of mathematics today has no known applications—yet!

Gordon Gray's account of Gödel's theorem is thoroughly misleading, and he has clearly not followed Cornforth's essentially correct discussion of it (though the Goldbach conjecture, that each even integer is a sum of two prime numbers, is "unproved to date"; almost certainly not "unprovable", as Cornforth suggests). Contrary to what Gray says, there are formal systems, such as the propositional calculus, which are known to be contradiction-free and complete. Gödel's theorem says that in a "sufficiently rich" formal system, there exist meaningful statements which can neither be proved nor disproved within the given system; ordinary arithmetic is "sufficiently rich", but as far as I know, there are no explicit examples of unprovable arithmetic statements. It does not follow from Gödel's

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theorem that we must tolerate contradictions—if it did, I feel sure that mathematicians and logicians would have given up in disgust long ago. The correct moral is that one must not attempt to live wholly in one formal system—one must construct hierarchies of formal systems.

Finally, how does Gordon Gray justify his extraordinary statement that there is a "real and usable contradiction" in special relativity, which "most physicists prefer to avoid"? This theory, proposed by Einstein in 1905, contained one really radical new assumption, that the velocity of light in a vacuum is independent of the velocity of the observer, and this was very quickly accepted as a new "law of nature". Proceeding from this, and other more orthodox assumptions about space-time, Einstein showed that the simple Newtonian rule for adding relative velocities has to be modified by a factor which, for very small relative velocities, is too small to observe. There is now ample experimental evidence that Einstein's "law of nature" gives better results than Newton's when high velocities are involved. Every physicist accepts this, and I just cannot imagine where Gordon Gray finds any "contradictions" to exploit in this story, or any evidence of a cover-up job by physicists other than Sommerfeld. As for the equation $c + v = c$, either the writer is using standard mathematical convention, in which case $v = 0$, or else he must explain his non-standard conventions in order to establish communication with others.

Peter Simple

THIS discussion is getting altogether too abstract and high hat; and at the same time a bit vituperative. Can't we be a little more concrete? Alan Spence says we can't break the laws society makes; but if the law says we must not drive more than 50 miles an hour and we do so, surely we break the law. The magistrate will certainly think so, and all Alan Spence's protests will not get us off that conviction. Such laws are not in the same category as scientific laws and it is surely an elementary mistake to say so. They are man-made rules and nothing more, and we may change them once a week if we like and break them right and left if we want to take the consequences.

But no legislator draws up Laws of Nature; they are not enforceable as human laws are, but nor can they be "broken"—the term is inapplicable. We can ignore them, but at our peril. They are in fact observed regularities on which we come to depend and often we find higher laws of which they are examples and so gain in reliability. We are often wrong about the certainty of these laws for they only hold under usual conditions. Lead is usually soft but a leaden disc rotated at high speed will cut iron. Newton's Laws of motion have since been shown to hold only under certain limited conditions laid down and verified by Einstein; and so on. There is no *logical* certainty about these laws, and no legislative authority behind them.

But things are even more confused when it is *dialectical* laws we are talking about. Both Cornforth and Spence seem to regard these as necessary for all valid thought in the world of science. If so they are indispensable. It must follow that those who know these laws of thought and operate the dialectical technique will have an enormous advantage of those who are ignorant of them. We shall therefore expect a host of dazzling discoveries from Marxist scientists quite eclipsing the feeble efforts of scientists who do not know how to think. What are these discoveries? Who, in recent years have pioneered the major advance in molecular biology, in the nature and structure of the DNA molecule? Who has cracked the genetic code? Have Marxist scientists any monopoly in the most recent discoveries in astronomy, which are of the most revolutionary nature? What are these advances in physics and chemistry, in medicine and biology which we in the West have failed to achieve?

What is the significance of these laws if they do not make any difference in practice? And do not say, "Oh, Western scientists practise them without knowing that they do." If so then knowing about them will not make any difference. It certainly has not made any difference as far as Marxist scientists are concerned. Surely the meaning of any statement is shown by the difference it makes if it is true. If it makes no difference what can it possibly mean? Is its sole virtue that it is a metaphysical concept that is abstractly true but not significant in any practical sense?

Very odd that Marx never said anything about the dialectics of nature, but only about the dialectics in which human ideas and the actions flowing from them were concerned. For Marx, when you study a particular situation and frame certain ideas about it which determine your actions, the actions create a new situation in which the former ideas no longer hold and you have to frame new ones. This and only this is what dialectics means for Marx. What on earth has anything that Cornforth or Spence to say got to do with this? Yet all *political* Marxists do use dialectics in this way, or they would soon be out of business.

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Mike Martin

AFTER reading the criticisms, and conflicting conclusions, flying about your pages these past months I have been induced to look back to last November's copy and read Maurice Cornforth's article for myself. The article, "Some Questions About Laws of Dialectics", may not have been so profound as its title might convey, but the outcome could make it worth while. The fact that it stimulated the thought, the criticisms, the name calling, the conflicting contortions, etc., was enlightening.

All too little time is spent on the theoretical and philosophical basis of our movement, and this polemic spotlights, I think, the need for clarity and perspective, which was lacking in much of the correspondence. Much more work must be done to improve the level of Marxist theoretical understanding, both within and, indeed, outside of the Communist Party.

The stated purpose for this article was to ask some questions on dialectics, and to suggest the way to answer them. Was he successful with this aim? The first question asked was, what sort of laws are dialectics. This was arrived at by a game of elimination.

Starting by differentiating between natural, and judicial laws, his pedestrian analysis failed to give any connection between judicial and social laws. This important omission caused Alan Spence to confuse the two in his criticism. The natural social laws gave man the basis for his judicial laws, but these were always formulated by the ruling classes, who did not understand these social laws. The laws they made were based on the remains of previous social progress, and naturally conflicted with new social trends. We have found that even in a progressive society, struggling to build socialism and communism, judicial laws tend to out-live their usefulness, and need constant revision. In fact the faster life changes, the sooner they are out of date. But this must remain until society develops above the need for judicial law.

He then continues with the laws of "Logic and Mathematics". How logic came to cohabit with mathematics, and became a single set of laws, I fail to see. Logic, being the general laws governing interconnections of thought, can therefore be equated with dialectics in thought. Mathematics is the science of measuring concrete reality, by comparing one energy, mass, or change in energy and, or, mass (i.e. time), with that of another. Thereby predicting probable qualities.

The possibility that the logic referred to is mathematical logic, makes the subsequent argument even more confusing. As to not being able to imagine what could not accord with these laws (what ever they are?) Comrade Emile Burns justifiably points out that what could not be imagined today was in the past common knowledge, and still is in some primitive areas.

This loose logic caused Comrade Challis to be led into confusing it with common logic, or sense. He states that "logic and mathematics are both proletarian categories at heart", and that, "animals do not behave logically". I wonder if this last remark refers to us human animals. Common logic being purely relative has the ability to appear all things to all men and can be proletarian or anything else, depending on who dispenses it. Coming back to animals. Sometimes they behave logically, i.e., in a manner that we think we would behave in their circumstances. Sometimes they don't. They're only human.

Then he discusses the discovery of objective laws. First of all the laws of nature, and the laws of logic and mathematics. (They're still married.) These are then admirably proven, with the assistance of Anti-Dühring, to have been discovered by experience from reality. But then we find that logic and mathematics suddenly become different from other laws, and cannot be tested by experience. Here again Emile Burns points out the contradiction.

Now, at last, after four pages, we come to the laws of dialectics. They are compared with the natural laws of Physics, Chemistry, etc., and eventually we reach the conclusion that dialectics is the skeleton that gives support and order to the natural scientific laws.

The universality of the laws of dialectics are then subjected to a test of their validity in nature, by asking when they do not apply. No example was found.

The conclusion of the article looks to the future development of dialectics, as determined by the very laws themselves. This is the task for the future, where natural scientific laws, being based on statistical averages of available information, will constantly be revised as the limits of knowledge are pushed back. So with the interconnections of the different sciences, and the laws of interconnections.

***The discussion on Laws of Dialectics is now closed. Maurice Cornforth will reply in a subsequent number of* Marxism Today.**

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British Youth—Progressive, Reactionary or Indifferent?

John Boyd

EVERYONE would agree with Barney Davis when he says that you cannot classify the whole of youth as being progressive, reactionary or indifferent. Why then does he go on to show that youth is progressive with a few minor faults, and why does Pete Carter elaborate further on this theme? This is because too often our Party and League is fond of jumping to all sorts of conclusions in our favour. We should look at *all* the facts and examine them scientifically instead of taking a few to base a very hypothetical thesis on an unsound analysis.

To illustrate this point let us examine thoroughly a few examples used by the previous contributors. The poor old Boy Scouts whom we are classically opposed to perhaps have a good deal to teach us. Let us take them as the first case.

Boy Scouts

What do we mean by Boy Scouts? Do we mean the Boy Scout Association, which incorporates all the branches of scouting including the Wolf Cubs, Boy Scouts, Air Scouts, Sea Scouts, the Rovers, Handicapped Branch, Senior Scouts, Scout Masters, and so on? Or are we interested in a particular section or age group? If we are interested in say the 15 and upwards age group then the bulk of scouts do not come into our definition of youth. The main activity of scouting takes place between the ages of 11 and 14. After this it is accepted that many boys' interest in scouting diminishes.

Boys mature at a much younger age nowadays compared with the period when scouting started. This is due mainly to the advance in education since the war, a higher standard of living, plus the fact that activities similar to scouting are included in the school curriculum. The current drop in the number of scouts is not surprising when considering that the "bulge" has just passed through the peak scout years. Their membership as a percentage of young people remains approximately the same. The Scout Association as with many national youth organisations is in financial difficulties and has been since the second world war. Since the war, Scouts have paid subscriptions and had "bob-a-job" weeks, whereas before the war donors supported the scout movement to a large extent in the form of land, buildings and cash. The appeal of scouting therefore is as attractive today as it was and has been since its inception in 1908, and is certainly very popular in the Pioneer movements of the socialist countries.

Top Twenty

Secondly pop records, or the 18th variation by the Left to show that the theme propagated "Youth are progressive" is top of and due to the hit parade. Obviously there are some progressive and liberal songs that get somewhere in the "top twenty". We have enough songs to do this, but for every good or progressive pop record there are ten of rubbish. What determines a hit? Surely we cannot say that youth is progressive just because a few of our songs get into the "top twenty". There are far too many factors determining a hit: whether there are other hits around at the time, the artist, words, backing, rhythm, record company, disc jockeys, holiday or Christmas time, and so on. In fact to rephrase Don Milligan's views on this point, pop music is nothing more than an indication that young people reject music of the square type and older people's music and demand something with a gimmick. If there should be a trend towards the hit parade being progressive, then it would be an indication that many young people are moving towards the Left, but this is not yet happening.

For the last twist on disc, it is very unrealistic to say that there were no protest records and songs in the days of Korea and Suez. There was no pop market as we know it today either.

The much-quoted youth activity around the CND and Vietnam is not just because young people are rebelling against society. The world situation shows quite clearly that the U.S. is wrong in Vietnam. Also never before in the history of mankind has the world faced the possibility of nuclear war and complete annihilation.

But let us not kid ourselves that the CND, YCND and anti-bomb movements, now including Vietnam under the same umbrella, are as strong today as they were three or four years ago.

Young people today have more self-confidence and are better able to express themselves than in

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previous generations. Again this is due more to the progress in education than anything else. Some of this self-expression could be and is just as easily used by the Right as the Left. This desire to be seen and heard makes the lives of teachers, trade union and YCL officials difficult, as well as the lives of policemen on a demonstration and on the sea front.

In the seamen's struggle against the shipowners and the incomes policy, where are the youth? Support for the seamen comes from the tried and trusted trade unionists. Today's young people must learn the lessons of class struggle as every generation has in the past. Youth are at a serious disadvantage because there is no mass children's or youth organisation of the Left. The working class has allowed its youth to be either politically isolated, won over or left in mid-air by the existing mass youth organisations which are led in the main by the ruling class.

The Scouts, whilst being an excellent movement which turns out boys with an all-round character, initiative, and its participants used to being in an organisation, subtly ignores the basic causes of the poverty, hunger, disease and crime which exist in the world today. Although Boy Scouts are nudged towards Queen and country and their training leaves them politically in mid-air, they represent a potential who could play a very useful role in the future of Britain given the correct leadership.

In the pitifully small national youth and children's organisations of the working class there is always the controversial question—do we fit our members for society or do we train them to change society? Both of course are essential.

Training for Society

The YCL to a certain extent faces the same question. Many members are poorly equipped for playing a part in today's society, although they want a change. The League is almost deficient of young people who have any sort of leading or important role in society today. Engineering apprentices for instance. These lads are to some extent militant, organised, and above all trained and able to play a small leading role in Britain today. They will be able to play an important role in building a socialist Britain as engineers. Let us show them the case, from their point of view, for a socialist society.

Unlike apprentices, young miners, and many others, the majority of YCL members desperately need training in many aspects of life. There should be as much effort put into education in the YCL as all the other activities put together. The YCL is after all a training ground for the Party.

Many young people not affiliated to any of the mass organisations are anti-organisation of any form. This means they could be anti-planning and anti-socialist. This section of people have been successfully taught to love the car, pop records and sex. Capitalism is supplying them with their wants at the same time as making them the most highly exploited section of the population.

Another large section of young people who attend part-time day and/or evening class is isolated from many aspects of life, studies consuming most of their spare time. It is nearly impossible and impracticable to organise them as students. Although educationally progressive they are politically ignorant and cut off.

Many girls, especially those in offices, see their role in life as having a good time before they marry, marrying and then raising a family.

Out of the 11 million young people from 15 to 30 years of age, 3 million are organised. Surely initially we should be aiming to seek common ground with this group, which represents a wide cross-section of young people, before attempting to organise and lead the remaining "unattached" youth.

The major question, of which way the YCL is going and what form it is going to take, has still to be discussed.

Without Sunglasses

It is hoped that this sketchy contribution will provoke discussion around this question and add some corrections to the analysis of the youth of today.

For it is of little or no use having two paid workers in the field on an old combine harvester if it is a root crop we are supposed to be digging up. Above all, the harvest to be reaped is a very mixed variety. In the initial stages we must beware of spending all our efforts on gathering unnutritious crops, especially when we have not a decent or large enough machine to process and *keep* them. To qualify this latter remark, the annual increase in the membership of the League is accompanied by an exodus of nearly the same figure.

The British youth movement and British youth have the most complex and complicated structure in the world. Until we begin to understand this structure we will not begin to go anywhere in leading British youth to building a socialist Britain. Let us not do this wearing sunglasses.

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